



# LIFE AND EXPERIENCES OF A BENGALI CHEMIST

VOLUME II

PRAFULLA CHANDRA RĀY

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## PREFACE

In the preface to the first volume of this work it was mentioned that "a large mass of materials has been left out" and that "if circumstances prove favourable a supplementary volume may come out later on." I have now the satisfaction of presenting the second and concluding volume, which, for aught I know, may prove to be my swan-song.

It was with considerable diffidence, nay with fear and trembling, that I presented the previous volume to the public, but I was somewhat "agreeably" surprised at the favourable reception accorded to it not only in India but also in England and America. As a chemist I consider myself an international property and some critics have naturally hinted at the large amount of space devoted to matters which might be considered as extraneous and foreign to the life of a chemist, pure and simple. I submit, however, that those who have closely watched my career will not have failed to notice that I have been something more than a mere chemist. True it is that throughout my active career, now extending over half-a-century, I have served Chemistry as the Goddess of my idolatry; to her I have been a whole-hearted devotee, and even at this advanced age she claims me as her own. But it should not be forgotten that the present volume and its predecessor include my "life and experiences." This is my apology for the presentation of the diverse activities connected therewith.

Social and economic problems relating to India and especially to Bengal have always claimed a portion of my attention, and thus what I have written is inextricably interwoven with my life and experiences. If now and then I have been drawn into realms which might be considered as political it is because, as Professor Bowley observes, "*economic and political events cannot be disentangled.*"

As an educationist I have devoted considerable space in this volume to matters educational. I have traced its progress



since the beginning of British rule in India and have been unsparing in criticising the wrong direction it has taken to the serious detriment of the future prospects of our young hopefuls, who have been accustomed to look to an academic career alone as a passport to success in life.

The saying is generally ascribed to that prince of diplomats, Talleyrand, that language was given to man to disguise his thoughts ; the student of science, however, cannot agree with the above dictum and he is inclined to call a spade a spade. Hence my considered opinions on a variety of subjects dealt with in these volumes have been freely expressed and sometimes, I am afraid, with brutal candour.

I have reproduced *verbatim et literatim* several passages from my essay on India published half-a-century ago. It is sad to reflect that there has been no material change of policy of the British Government during the last fifty years ; any change that has occurred is only a *change for the worse* as evidenced by the New Constitution. The problems—social and economic—which were acute then have become acuter still.

It now remains for me to express my indebtedness to Professor J. C. Ghosh, Head of the Department of Chemistry, Dacca University, for many useful hints and criticisms. Dr. P. K. Bose, my colleague and ex-pupil, has laid me under a deep debt of obligation by taking upon himself the arduous task of looking through the proofs and preparing the table of contents and the index. He has also furnished me with many valuable suggestions.

October, 1935.  
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF SCIENCE  
AND TECHNOLOGY,  
CALCUTTA.

P. C. R.

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# IMPACT OF WEST WITH EAST<sup>1</sup>

## CHAPTER I.

If it had been intended to keep the British nation in ignorance of real knowledge, the Baconian philosophy would not have been allowed to displace the system of the schoolmen, which was the best calculated to perpetuate ignorance. In the same manner the Sanscrit system would be the best calculated to keep this country in darkness, if such had been the policy of the British Legislature. But as the improvement of the native population is the object of the Government, it will consequently promote a more liberal and enlightened system of instruction, embracing mathematics, natural philosophy, chemistry and anatomy, with other useful sciences which may be accomplished with the sum proposed, by employing a few gentlemen of talents and learning educated in Europe, and providing a College furnished with the necessary books, instruments and other apparatus.—RAM MOHUN ROY: *Letter to Lord Amherst, 1823.*

It is one of the most unintelligible facts in the history of English education in India, that at the very time when the Natives themselves were crying out for instruction in European literature and science, and were protesting against a continuance of the prevailing orientalism, a body of English gentlemen appointed to initiate a system of education for the country, was found to insist upon the retention of oriental learning to the practical exclusion of European learning.—HOWELL.

Warren Hastings, whose equanimity and versatility excite the admiration of Macaulay, was the first British ruler of India who recognised the necessity of encouraging learning, both among the young civil servants and the people under his charge.

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<sup>1</sup> For the materials of this article, I am chiefly indebted to the following books:—

Selections from Educational Records, Part I (1781—1839) by H. Sharp.

Selections from Educational Records, Part II (1840—1859) by I. A. Richey.

Education in British India by Arthur Howell (1872).

To avoid a break in the narrative, page references to extracts have not been given. A good deal of this section is an amplification of what I wrote fifty years ago in *India*, 1886.

Although the home authorities, in their infinite wisdom, had established a Crown Court in Calcutta, to "administer English law on the model of the Courts in Westminster," it was found impossible to obey their commands in their entirety. The rulers on the spot found it absolutely necessary to enquire into the customs of the people, as sanctioned by their religions, their laws of inheritance, and so forth. This could not be done without a knowledge of the *Shastras* and the *Koran*. Thus it was that the *moulvis* and the *pandits* became the referees of the English judge, who, before he had touched the soil of India, had probably in all simplicity and innocence concluded that the Orientals had stolen the principles of their jurisprudence from Justin and Alfred. The appointment of Sir W. Jones, who had already acquired proficiency in Arabic and Persian, as a puisne judge of the Supreme Court, brought about the advent of a new era. The occult lore of the Brahmins, the hidden treasures of the East, were now to be unlocked and poured forth into the West. Warren Hastings, who himself had a fair acquaintance with Persian, could not fail to appreciate the researches of the great linguist.

#### I—EARLIEST GOVERNMENT EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.

The first educational institution established in India by the British Government was the Calcutta Muhammadan College or Madrassa founded in 1780, at the request of several Muhammadans of distinction, by Warren Hastings, who purchased a piece of ground for the erection of a suitable building for it at his own expense amounting to Rs. 5,641/-. The monthly cost of the College was Rs. 625/-, which was also defrayed by the Governor-General until 1782, when he was reimbursed and the institution taken over by the Government.

The general object of the founder was to conciliate the Muhammadans of Calcutta, and through the learned Moulvies to teach Arabic and Persian with the whole range of Muhammadan religion, including theology and the ritual observances. The main and special object of the institution was to qualify

the sons of Muhammadan gentlemen for responsible and lucrative offices in the State, even at that date largely monopolised by the Hindus, and to produce competent officers for the Courts of Justice to which students from the Madrassa, on the production of certificates of qualification, were to be drafted as vacancies occurred.

The next attempt on the part of the British Government was initiated in 1793 by Mr. Jonathan Duncan, Resident at Benares, who founded the Benares Sanskrit College as a means of employing beneficially for the country some part of the surplus revenue over the estimated receipts. This College was designed to cultivate the "laws, literature and religion of the Hindus," to accomplish the same purpose for the Hindus as the Madrassa for the Muhammadans, and specially to supply qualified Hindu Assistants to European Judges. The expense for the first year was limited to Rs. 14,000/-, later on augmented to Rs. 20,000/- annually by the orders of Government on the 13th January, 1792, in which Lord Cornwallis expressed his entire approval of the measure.

## II—THE COLLEGE OF FORT WILLIAM.

The next important step is the establishment of the College of Fort William which was actually in operation from May 4, 1800, but was formally opened on August 18, by a Minute in Council in which the Governor-General detailed at length the reasons for starting such an institution.

The Company's Civil Service, although it produced a few men of first-rate ability, (*e.g.* H. T. Colebrooke) had sunk into the lowest depths of vice and ignorance. The Service had its origin in a mercantile staff, well-versed in the mysteries of the counting house; and its training, since the Factory had grown into an Empire, had not been sufficient for the more important duties which now devolved upon it. The system which Burke had reprobated fifteen years ago was still unchanged, and lads of fifteen to eighteen were being sent out to India before their education could be finished, with no opportunity or inducement on their arrival to complete it.

\* \* \* \* \*



Of the languages and manners of the people whose affairs they were called upon to administer, they were not required to know even the rudiments.<sup>2</sup> The Minute denounced in the strongest terms "the absolute insufficiency of this class of young men to execute the duties of any station whatsoever in the Civil Service of the Company beyond the menial, laborious and unprofitable duty of a mere copying clerk."

\* \* \* \* \*

The Minute then declares that "a College is hereby founded at Fort William in Bengal for the better instruction of the Junior Civil Servants of the Company".<sup>3</sup>

Carey was appointed teacher of Bengali and Sanskrit languages in April, 1801. On January 1, 1807, he was raised to the status of a Professor and he continued till 1831 to be the most notable figure in the College of Fort William. Of the achievements of Carey in the domain of Bengali prose-writing there will be occasion to relate later on.

Although it is hardly relevant to the general history of educational development in India, the College of Fort William deserves some mention as a striking educational institution of the time and as the subject of various interesting documents. The Marquis of Wellesley, impressed with the "sloth, indolence, low debauchery and vulgarity," which too often grew upon the younger servants of the Company, decided that they should have a proper education in Calcutta.

The Court of Directors took strong exception to the foundation of this expensive institution, which narrowly escaped immediate extinction. In 1806 the East India College at Haileybury was founded, whence the writers proceeded to the College at Fort William.

To trace any recognition on the part of the authorities in England of a feeling of duty in the matter of diffusing education in India, we must go back to an earlier period.

<sup>2</sup> It appears from the proceedings of the Governor-General in Council, dated as far back as September 10, 1790, that with a view to the acquisition of the Indian languages by the Company's writers, encouragement was afforded by offering them allowance and other facilities (Seton-Karr : *Selections from Calcutta Gazette*, II, pp. 213-14), but it was never enjoined upon them as a matter of duty or necessity.

<sup>3</sup> The College continued till 1854; but since the foundation of Calcutta School Book Society and Hindu College in 1817, its importance was overshadowed and diminished.

It is curious that the present system of Government education, which has been consistently based on strict religious neutrality, first publicly declared by Lord Wellesley in 1804, originated in an association of education with missionary enterprise. The association was natural enough in England, where, until recently, the office of priest and schoolmaster has been considered inseparable, and where interference by the State in public education was resented as an intrusion upon the Church. In 1793, on the renewal of the Company's Charter, Mr. Wilberforce, instigated by Mr. Charles Grant, succeeded in carrying through Parliament a resolution to the effect "that it is the peculiar and bounden duty of the British Legislature to promote, by all just and prudent means, the interest and happiness of the inhabitants of the British dominions in India; and that for these ends such measures ought to be adopted as may gradually tend to their religious and moral improvement."

### III—CHARTER OF 1813—EDUCATION GRANT OF £10,000.

But after the battle of Plassey and during the next thirty years—the darkest period of Anglo-Indian history—the Company's servants seem to have felt a constant apprehension of losing all the fruits of the victory as suddenly as they were acquired, and no proposal excited more alarm than one involving any real or supposed interference with native religious prejudices. To show the general feeling at the time, it is enough to mention that in 1808 one of the most intelligent officers in the Company's service, then Resident at a Native Court, deemed it to be "madness" to attempt the conversion of the natives of India, or to give them any more learning or any other description of learning than what they then possessed. "The Hindus," he said, "had as good a system of faith and of morals as most people"; and with regard to the Mussalmans, "it is quite sufficient if we endeavour to conciliate their confidence and to mitigate their vindictive spirit."

In 1813, when the further renewal of the East India

Company's Charter was discussed, it was felt necessary to obtain local information about the great dependency, specially on the subject of the state and need of education or missionary enterprise, and the House resolved itself into a Committee for this purpose. Among the witnesses examined were Warren Hastings, then in his 80th year, Lord Teignmouth, Sir John Malcolm, Sir Thomas Munro, and a host of minor Indian celebrities, but the evidence was generally in strong opposition to educational or missionary efforts being undertaken or even recognised by the State. And it is remarkable that so far from thinking that any measures for the enlightenment of the people of India ought to be originated in England, the general tenor of the evidence of the old Indian was that any such measures would be in the highest degree dangerous. Indeed, Sir Thomas Munro did not hesitate to declare his conviction that "if civilisation were to become an article of trade between the two countries, England would be the gainer by the import cargo."

Again, in 1811, a worthy of the name of Sir John Anstruther, who had been once Chief Justice of the Calcutta Supreme Court, and who, on his return home, had secured a seat in Parliament, inquired with surprise and horror "whether it was really meant to illumine the people of India, and whether it was really desirable to do so"; the prevailing idea was that diffusion of Western sentiments was incompatible with the preservation of the newly acquired empire in Asia.

Better counsels, however, prevailed. In the renewed Charter that resulted from these discussions, a clause was inserted on the motion of Mr. Robert Percy Smith, a Member of Parliament and late Advocate-General at Calcutta, and was sanctioned by the Earl of Buckinghamshire, then President of the Board of Control, providing that "it shall be lawful for the Governor-General in Council to direct that out of any surplus which may remain of the rents, revenues and profits," after defraying all Civil and Military charges, "a sum of not less than one lakh of rupees (£10,000) in each year shall be set apart.

and applied to the revival and improvement of literature and the encouragement of the learned natives of India, and for the introduction and promotion of knowledge of the sciences among the inhabitants of the British territories of India''.

The general interest in education, which had been aroused in England by the labours of Bell and Lancaster in 1797, had shown itself in the establishment of the British and Foreign School Society in 1805, the National Society in 1811, and petitions addressed to Parliament during the discussion of 1813, naturally commenced about this time to have influence in the direct administration of India.

#### IV—LORD MINTO'S LAMENTATION.

On the 6th March, 1811, Lord Minto (Governor-General, 1807-13), instigated by Sir H. T. Colebrooke, an eminent oriental scholar then in Council, recorded an elaborate minute lamenting the decay of science and literature in India, consequent on the want of the encouragement formerly afforded to them by Native Governments, and urging the establishment of two new Sanskrit Colleges at Naddea and Tirhut. In the same minute Lord Minto admitted the equal claims of the Muhammadan community on behalf of Persian and Arabic literature; but he felt unable to recommend any further measures until the orders of the Court of Directors had been received upon his original proposals. The Governor-General's benevolent designs were approved by the Court of Directors in 1814, and were entrusted to a Committee of Superintendence formed from the local officials in Naddea and Tirhut; but probably owing to the accession of a new Governor-General, no further steps were actually taken to carry them out until they were revived by another eminent Sanskrit scholar, Mr. H. H. Wilson, in 1821, when, instead of the two projected Colleges, it was determined to establish a Hindu Sanskrit College in Calcutta on the model of the Benares College, with an annual Government grant of Rs. 25,000/-.

## V—ORIENTALISM FAVOURED.

On the 3rd June, 1814, the Court of Directors issued their first educational despatch, relative to the disposal of the lakh of rupees.

The Court does not appear to have formed a very definite opinion of the learning that was to be encouraged and of the sciences that were to be promoted, but such instructions as were given were all in favour of orientalism.

"We are informed that there are in the Sanskrit language many excellent systems of ethics, with codes of laws and compendiums of the duties relating to every class of the people, the study of which might be useful to those natives who may be destined for the Judicial Department of Government. There are also many tracts of merit, we are told, on the virtues of plants and drugs and on the application of them in medicines, the knowledge of which might prove desirable to the European practitioner ; and there are treatises on astronomy and mathematics, including geometry and algebra, which, though they may not add new light to European science, might be made to form links of communication between the natives and the gentlemen in our service who are attached to the Observatory, and to the Department of Engineers, and by such intercourse the natives might gradually be led to adopt the modern improvements in those and other sciences.

"With a view to these several objects, we have determined that due encouragement should be given to such of servants in any of those departments as may be disposed to apply themselves to the study of the Sanskrit language and we desire that the teachers, who may be employed under your authority for this purpose, may be selected from those amongst the natives who may have made some proficiency in the sciences in question, and that their recompense should be liberal."

## VI—MISSIONARY EFFORT.

From 1813, owing to the causes above stated, the Indian Government seem to have had no settled policy or even intention on the subject of education, but several disjointed efforts

are worth recording. In 1814 a High School was established by a Missionary, Mr. Robert May, at Chinsurah, and some smaller schools were affiliated to it. This school was conducted with such success that, in 1816, a Government grant of Rs. 600/- per month (afterwards augmented to Rs. 800/-) was sanctioned for it. This appears to have been the first grant-in-aid made on the principles now in force. In November, 1814, the Collector of Cuttack submitted to the Governor-General in Council several documents relative to a claim set up by Moulvi Abdul Karim to a pension or payment of one rupee per diem, which had been allowed by the former Government as a charitable allowance for the support of a school in the district of Hijeli. The Government authorised the payment of the pension with arrears.

#### VII—JAYNARAYAN GHOSAL—EMINENT BENGALI PIONEER OF EDUCATION IN NORTHERN INDIA.

In the same year (1814), the Benares Charity School was founded from the interest of Rs. 20,000/- deposited by Jaynarayan Ghosal, an inhabitant of Benares, with an addition of a monthly grant of Rs. 252/- from Government. In this school English, Persian, Hindustani, and Bengali were taught with reading and writing, grammar and arithmetic, together with the Government regulations, general history, geography and astronomy.

As no account of English education in India can be complete without a history of Jaynarayan's, I make no apology for inserting it here. It is culled from a brief report kindly furnished by Principal P. Russell<sup>4</sup> who very properly observes that "his High School might claim to be the oldest English teaching school in the whole of Northern India." Its origin reads like a romance when it is borne in mind that its founder was an orthodox Hindu and that he anticipated even the precursors of western education like Ram Mohun Roy.

"Maharaj Jaynarayan Ghoshal, of a well-known Bengali family, left

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<sup>4</sup> The present Head of the School.

his home in Calcutta towards the close of the eighteenth century, in bad health, and came, like a pious Hindu, to Benares to die.

"This was in 1814; and during the four succeeding years Jaynarayan was in consultation with Daniel Corrie as to how to place the school on a permanent and proper foundation."

#### EXTRACT FROM JAYNARAYAN'S OWN ACCOUNT.

"From the information communicated by him (Corrie) respecting the Church Missionary Society and from a perusal of one of that Society's reports which he gave me, I determined upon making the Calcutta Committee of the Church Missionary Society the Trustees of my school and assigning to them the property which I had appropriated for the endowment of it. Accordingly I have requested them to undertake the trust, and legal measures are in progress for transferring the school endowment permanently into their hands. In the meantime my house in Bengalee Tolah, which cost me in building Rs. 48,000, has been appropriated for a school house and Mr. Adlington has begun to give instruction in the English tongue. Thus what I have been many years desiring, begins to be accomplished. But I long greatly that the most effectual means may be used for enlightening the minds of my countrymen. I am therefore anxious to have a Printing Press also established at Benares, by which school books might be speedily multiplied and treatises on different subjects might be printed and generally dispersed throughout the country. Without this the progress of knowledge must be very slow and the Hindoos long remain in their very fallen state, which is a very painful consideration to a benevolent mind. I therefore most earnestly request the Hon'ble Church Missionary Committee to take measures for sending out a Printing Press to Benares with one or two suitable Missionaries to superintend it—men of learning who may be able to satisfy the enquiries of the learned of this ancient city on subjects of Science and History as well as of Religion. From the reception which the labours of the Missionaries of Serampore and of the School Book Society in Calcutta met with, I know how welcome to my countrymen such an establishment at Benares would be; and as the Hon'ble Church Missionary Society liberally expends its funds for the benefit of mankind, there is no place where their labours are likely to be more beneficial than at Benares and I earnestly hope they will not be backward to assist the efforts that I am making here." (August 12, 1818).

#### VIII—THE SERAMPORE MISSIONARIES—THE GREAT TRIO.

About this time a new stimulus began to be applied to the cause of education in India of a nature which has been

steadily increasing in power from that day to this, which is growing and of which it is impossible to foresee the result. Towards the end of 1799, two Baptist Missionaries, Marshman and Ward, of small means and humble origin, landed in Calcutta with the intention of joining Mr. Carey, who had been deputed thither by the same Society about six years previously. Being provided with no license from the East India Company, and fearful of being sent back to England, they settled themselves in the small Danish Settlement of Serampore.

On his return from the North-Western Provinces, Lord Moira issued, on the 2nd October, 1815, a minute declaring his solicitude for the moral and intellectual condition of the natives, and his anxiety to see established and maintained some system of public education. He thought that the humble but valuable class of village schoolmasters claimed the first place in the discussion and that the efforts of Government should be directed to the improvement of existing tuition. The minute was followed by a direct application to the Court of Directors for permission to encourage schools formed on principles altogether different from the Oriental Institutions which alone, up to that date, had enjoyed the regular support of Government. In November, 1815, Lord Moira visited the little colony at Serampore, a step worth recording as the first kind of direct encouragement which missionary effort on behalf of education had received from a Governor-General of India.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> The sudden intellectual awakening in Bengal and the consequent demand for education had called into existence many private schools. Most of these private schools, whence emerged many of the distinguished men of the day, were set on foot by Anglo-Indians who seized upon this new profession as a godsend. In these schools Anglo-Indian and Indian students sat side by side, their interests for the moment identical—the eager pursuit of knowledge that should equip them in their struggle to keep pace with the rapid progress of the times. William Sherbourne, son of an Englishman and a Brahmin mother, was one of the first Anglo-Indians to take pride in his birth, and the school that he opened in a house in the Chitpore Road was long famous as one of the most successful seminaries of the day.—Bradley-Birt: *Poems of Derzeto*, p. xviii.



## IX—THE VIDYALAYA.

Lord Moira's minute of 1815 was followed by the establishment of the Vidyalaya or Anglo-Indian College in Calcutta. The foundation of this College marks an important era in the history of education in India as the first spontaneous desire manifested by the natives of the country for instruction in English and the literature of Europe. This was the first blow to Oriental literature and science heretofore exclusively cultivated in the Government Colleges. The new institution was started at a meeting of many of the leading Natives of Calcutta at the house of the Chief Justice, Sir Hyde East, who has left an interesting account of the origin of the project and of the original rules drawn up for its management. The further peculiarity of the College was its being designed "primarily for the sons of respectable Hindus," and entirely under Native superintendence—the funds amounting to nearly a lakh of rupees being voluntary contributions by the projectors of the scheme. Dr. Duff's account of these proceedings may best be given in his own words.

"English education was in a manner forced upon the British Government ; it did not itself spontaneously originate it. The system of English education commenced in the following very simple way in Bengal. There were two persons who had to do with it,—one was Mr. David Hare, and the other was a Native, Rammohun Roy. In the year 1815 they were in consultation one evening with a few friends as to what would be done with a view to the elevation of the Native mind and character. Mr. David Hare was a watch-maker in Calcutta, an ordinary illiterate man himself ; but being a man of great energy and strong practical sense, he said, the plan should be to institute an English school or college for the instruction of native youths. Accordingly he soon drew up and issued a circular on the subject, which gradually attracted the attention of the leading Europeans, and, among others, of the Chief Justice, Sir Hyde East. Being led to consider the proposed measure, he entered heartily into it, and got a meeting of European gentlemen assembled in May, 1816. He invited also

some of the influential natives to attend. Then it was unanimously agreed that they should commence an institution for the teaching of English to the children of the higher classes, to be designated "The Hindoo College of Calcutta." A large joint committee of Europeans and Natives was appointed to carry the design into effect. In the beginning of 1817, the college, or rather school, was opened, and it was the very first English seminary in Bengal, or even in India, as far as I know."

It reflects no small credit on the Hindus, that long before England had learned to do anything of the kind, they themselves had founded a college at Calcutta, by their "own voluntary contributions, for the instruction of their youth in English literature and science."<sup>8</sup>

The result of introducing the wide range of European literature and science into the native community at Calcutta was to open a new, strange world to the students. As Greek literature was in the Augustan age at Rome, or as Latin and Greek were at the mediæval revival of letters in the Western world, so English became to the young collegians. Every day opened to them for the first time, a succession of new and strange phenomena in the unsealed realm of history, science, and philosophy; they were suddenly thrown adrift from the moorings and anchorages of old creeds, and tossed upon the wide sea of speculation and extravagance. It was no wonder that moral and social obligations began to share the fate of religious beliefs, and that the whole community was in alarm at the spread of the new views. This was precisely the state of things which Mr. Charles Marsh had eloquently anticipated during the discussion of the Charter of 1813:—"It is one thing," he said, "to dispel the charm that binds mankind to established habits and ancient obligations, and another to turn

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<sup>8</sup> C. E. Trevelyan: *Education in India* (1838). Also: "The wealthy Hindus have just set on foot a school or college without any aid or countenance from Government, who (very wisely, I think) have wished the work to be done by themselves. . . . The Superintendent is a military officer, and the only Englishman connected with the establishment."—La Bas's *Life of Bishop Middleton*, Vol. I. Ed. 1831, p. 391.

them over to the discipline of new institutions and the authority of new doctrines. In that dreadful interval,—that dreary void where the mind is left to wander and grope its way without the props that have hitherto supported it, or the lights that have guided it,—what are the chances that they will discern the beauties or submit to the restraints of the religion you propose to give them?"

The Committee of Public Instruction was quick in appreciating the valuable work of this college and in one of its reports observed:—"In addition to the measures adopted for the diffusion of English in the Provinces, and which are yet only in their infancy, the encouragement of the Vidyalaya, or Hindoo College of Calcutta, has always been one of the chief objects of the Committee's attention. The consequence has surpassed expectation,—a command of the English language, and a familiarity with its literature and science have been acquired to an extent rarely equalled by any schools in Europe. A taste for English has been widely disseminated, and independent schools conducted by young men, reared in the Vidyalaya, are springing up in every direction. The moral effect has been equally remarkable, and an impatience of the restrictions of Hindooism, and a disregard of its ceremonies, are openly avowed by many young men of respectable birth and talents, and entertained by many more who outwardly conform to the practices of their countrymen. Another generation will probably witness a very material alteration in the notions and feelings of the educated classes of the Hindoo community of Calcutta."

#### X—DEROZIO AND HIS PUPILS.

The effect of the teaching in the Hindu College on Young Bengal, specially that imparted by Derozio<sup>7</sup>—the Eurasian boy, poet and philosopher of nineteen years of age—is vividly

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<sup>7</sup> Henry Louis Vivian Derozio was born in 1809 and joined the Hindu College in 1828 when he was barely 19. As far as precocious development is concerned he may be compared to Chatterton, "the fate marked babe", who composed the Rowley Poems and died at the age of 18. Derozio died in 1831.

described in the *Life and Times of Ramtanu Lahiri* by Sivanath Sastri, translated from Bengali by Sir Roper Lethbridge, from which short extracts are given below :

"It was customary then to send to the Hindu College such boys from the Society's school as had creditably completed their course there.

"The well-known Mr. Henry Vivian Derozio, was the master of this class. This young man was gifted with extraordinary talents. This much we say now, that he introduced a new epoch in the intellectual and moral history of Bengal, and moulded, when they were boys, the character of men like Ramtanu Lahiri, Krishnamohan Banerji, Rasik Krishna Mullick, Dakshinaranjan Mukherji and Ram Gopal Ghosh. Though he taught the fourth class alone, he was friendly with almost all the students of the college.

"Mr. Derozio's house had a great attraction for these young lads. There they had learnt much and enjoyed much. Ideas quite novel were so presented before their minds that they could easily grasp them. Not only were their intellects sharpened, but their views with regard to their moral duties too were expanded under his influence. The hitherto impregnable stronghold of prejudice and superstition was adroitly attacked by him ; and Hindu lads, brought up from infancy in the belief that the society of a Christian is contaminating, and that the food touched by him or prepared in his house is so defiling as to hurl him who ate it to the lowest depths of hell, broke asunder the shackles of caste, and freely ate with their Eurasian friend.

"In a year Mr. Derozio gained so great an ascendancy over the minds of his pupils that its effects were visible on all their thoughts and actions.<sup>8</sup> Babu Hara Mohan Chatterjee, at that

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<sup>8</sup> Recognized at eighteen, even among the select little inner circle of intellectuals who then held sway in Calcutta, as a poet and writer of outstanding ability, he wielded an influence among his own contemporaries and over the younger students of his day, that, even allowing for the spell of his compelling personality, can only be regarded as amazing. To all with whom he came in contact he made the same magnetic appeal. Beneath the impulsiveness and vivacity and enjoyment of the boy there lay the depth and strength and broad-mindedness of the man, and it was

time clerk of the Hindu College, writes on this point, and we quote his very words :

"The students of the first, second and third classes had the advantage of attending a conversazione in the school held by Mr. Derozio, where readings in poetry, literature, and moral philosophy were carried on. The meetings were held almost daily, before or after school hours. Though they were without the knowledge or sanction of the authorities, yet Mr. Derozio's disinterested zeal and devotion in teaching the students these subjects were characterised by a noble philanthropy. The students in return loved him most tenderly, and were ever ready to be guided by his counsels, and imitate him in all their daily actions. In fact, Mr. Derozio gained so great an ascendancy over the minds of his pupils, that they would not move even in their private concerns without his counsel and advice. On the other hand, he fostered their taste in literature, taught the evil effects of idolatry and superstition, and so far reformed their moral feelings as to place them completely above the antiquated ideas and aspirations of the age. Such was the force of his instruction, that the conduct of the students out of the college was exemplary. It gained them the applause of the world, from the literary and scientific point of view and also, what was of greater importance, they were all considered men of truth. Indeed, it was a general belief and saying amongst our countrymen, which those who remember the time must acknowledge, that 'such a boy is incapable of falsehood, because he is a college boy.' "

Derozio's *Sonnet to the Pupils of the Hindu College* admirably describes with pathos the almost paternal interest with which he watched them :

Expanding like the petals of young flowers  
I watch the gentle opening of your minds,  
And the sweet loosening of the spell that binds  
Your intellectual energies and powers,

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this happy combination of the grave and gay, of the spontaneity of youth and the wisdom of age, that constituted something of the secret of his wonderful charm.—Bradley-Birt: *Poems of Derozio*.

That stretch (like young birds in soft summer hours)  
 Their wings, to try their strength. O, how the winds  
 Of circumstances, and freshening April showers  
 Of early knowledge, and unnumbered kinds  
 Of new perceptions shed their influence;  
 And how you worship truth's omnipotence.  
 What joyance rains upon me, when I see  
 Fame in the mirror of futurity,  
 Weaving the chaplets you have yet to gain,  
 Ah then I feel I have not lived in vain.

The Eurasian community of those days was often misled  
 into looking upon India as a foreign land—not so Derozio.

*To India—My Native Land.*

My country! in thy day of glory past  
 A beauteous halo circled round thy brow,  
 And worshipped as a deity thou wast.  
 Where is that glory, where that reverence now?  
 Thy eagle pinion is chained down at last,  
 And grovelling in the lowly dust art thou:  
 Thy minstrel hath no wreath to weave for thee  
 Save the sad story of thy misery!  
 Well—let me dive into the depths of time,  
 And bring from out the ages that have rolled  
 A few small fragments of those wrecks sublime,  
 Which human eye may never more behold;  
 And let the guerdon of my labour be  
 My fallen country! one kind wish from thee!

The boldness with which the Hindu College boys attacked  
 the religious and social institutions of their country was thus  
 set forth by the same Hara Mohan Chatterjee whom we have  
 just quoted:

“The principles and practices of Hindu religion were openly  
 ridiculed and condemned, and angry disputes were held on  
 moral subjects. The sentiments of Hume had been widely  
 diffused and warmly patronized. The most glowing harangues  
 were delivered at debating clubs, which were then numerous.  
 The Hindu religion was denounced as vile and corrupt, and un-  
 worthy of the regard of rational beings. The degraded state of

the Hindus formed the topic of many debates ; their ignorance and superstitions were declared to be the causes of such a state, and it was then resolved that nothing but a liberal education could enfranchise the minds of the people. The degradation of the female mind was viewed with indignation. The resolution, at a very large meeting, was carried unanimously that Hindu women should be taught ; and we are assured of the fact that the wife of one of the leaders of the movement was a most accomplished lady, who included, amongst the subjects with which she was acquainted, moral philosophy and mathematics."

#### XI—DAVID HARE AND THE HINDU COLLEGE.

"This history of the Hindu College embodies the history of modern Bengali culture in the second and third quarters of the nineteenth century ; but it is somewhat extraordinary that of the names of all the persons who were instrumental in establishing the institution, the name of a foreigner should occupy a prominent place. But perhaps no foreigner in Bengal has ever pursued so remarkable a career as David Hare. Himself a man of limited education, he is gratefully remembered to-day as one of the founders of English education in Bengal. Never directly connected with teaching, nor openly assuming the role of a reformer, he was yet an educator and reformer in the best sense of the terms. Hare affords the remarkable, and perhaps the solitary, instance in Bengal of an individual who without any refinement of education, without high intellectual endowments, without place or power or wealth, acquired and retained a most important and influential position in the history of modern culture in Bengal, simply by a constant and sincere endeavour of unostentatious service.

The other name which is especially associated with that of David Hare in the foundation of the Hindu College is that of Raja Ram Mohun Roy. Ram Mohun incarnates the impulse which led thinking Indians to devise and work for English education, without an exaggerated faith, however, in the foreign and in the external, and without any desire, again, of aggressive antagonism against orthodox conventions irres-

pective of their merits. In his role as the enlightener of the people, he, more than any other Indian of that day, advocated the necessity of a new departure in education ; a new departure in which the literature and sciences of the West should bring new inspiration and lift the minds of his countrymen from the rigidity of dead habits and traditional forms. In David Hare, on the other hand, the scheme found an eager, active and valuable supporter who had already endeared himself to the people of the land by his large-hearted benevolence and interest in education, and whose energy and practical common sense carried the scheme into maturity and fruition. Hare was neither a Government official nor a Christian missionary but he represents the whole-hearted sympathy which Englishmen of those days felt for their land of adoption. He helped not only in the establishment of the Hindu College but, year after year, he superintended patiently the growth of the institution. Contemporary records are full of references to his quaint figure, dressed in a long blue coat adorned with large brass buttons, moving through the class room or attending the debates of the Academic Association, to his old-fashioned palanquin which was a veritable moving dispensary, as well as to his amiable countenance always beaming at the hovel of the charity boy or at the bed-side of the fever-stricken student. It is in the fitness of things that David Hare's mortal remains, which were denied the rites of Christian burial by an impatient orthodoxy, should lie to this day buried under the monument, erected by a people's love to his memory, on the south side of the tank in College Square and within sight of the College Street and Hare School.

The facts of David Hare's life are very few and can be told very briefly. Son of a watchmaker in London, who had married an Aberdeen lady, Hare came out to Calcutta in 1800 at the age of twenty-five as a watchmaker ; and, after following that profession for several years he made over his concern (before 1816) to his friend, one Mr. Grey, under whose roof he led his bachelor life till his death on June 1, 1842 at the age of sixty-seven. Instead of returning to his native country,



like the rest of his countrymen, with the competence he had acquired, he adopted for his own the country of his sojourn, and cheerfully devoted the remainder of his life to the one object dear to himself, namely, the spread of Western education, for which he spared neither personal trouble, nor money, nor influence".—*The Hindu College and the Reforming Young Bengal* by S. K. De in *Acharyya Rây 70th Birthday Commemoration Volume*.

## XII—SCOTTISH CHURCH AND ALEXANDER DUFF.

The year 1830 was remarkable for an event which, though unnoticed in the official records of the year, had a powerful influence on the character and progress of education in India. About the year 1824, the Church of Scotland, aroused from the repose that followed the subsidence of foreign persecution and domestic contention, began to emulate the efforts made by missionary societies in England, and to turn their attention to the wide field offered to them in the East. Dr. John Bryce and Dr. Inglis were the mainspring of the movement of which it was characteristic and consistent that education should form a prominent feature. Education had done much for Scotland, and on education the Church hoped to find a sound basis for missionary effort in India. The success of the measure depended on the man deputed to initiate it, and the man deputed was Dr. Duff. He landed at Calcutta in May, 1830, and in spite of precedent, tradition and authority, and difficulties that would have disconcerted a less ready, earnest and resolute mind, he succeeded in the following August in establishing a seminary in which literary, scientific, and religious education was the declared object, and English the channel of instruction. The seminary was a success from the first, and soon counted an average attendance of eight hundred pupils, notwithstanding the open denunciation of the conservative Hindu party, and the ill-concealed opposition of those who anticipated failure from religious teaching in any shape, and from the comparative neglect of Sanskrit and Arabic, the learned languages of the country. The seminary is now called the Free Church Institu-

tion,—a standing monument of the debt which the cause of enlightenment owes to Dr. Duff and his associates. There are now in Calcutta four large Missionary Institutions—the Free Church, the General Assembly's Institution, the Cathedral Mission College, and the London Missionary Society's Institution.<sup>9</sup>

### XIII—CONTROVERSY BETWEEN ANGLICISTS AND ORIENTALISTS.

The Charter of 1813 only provided a grant of £10,000 for the spread of education. But insignificant as the sum was, it has an historic importance, for over it was fought a battle, the issues of which have been far-reaching, namely, the controversy between the Anglicists and Orientalists.

Lord Hastings retired in 1823, and his temporary successor, Mr. Adam, distinguished himself by at last initiating a body to carry out the policy intended by the framers of the educational clause in the Charter of 1813. Influenced by Mr. Holt Mackenzie, the author of the first Note on Education, Mr. Adam appointed a General Committee of Public Instruction for the purpose of ascertaining the state of education in the Bengal Presidency and of "the public institutions designed for its promotion, and of considering, and from time to time submitting to Government, the suggestion of such measures as it may appear expedient to adopt, with a view to the better instruction of the people, to the introduction among them of useful knowledge including the sciences and arts of Europe, and to the improvement of their moral character."

From its earliest constitution this Committee was guided by two great principles, which became traditional, and had the most important effect upon the progress of education. The first was an endeavour to win the confidence of the educated and influential classes, by encouraging the learning and literature

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<sup>9</sup> Howell wrote the above in 1871. The Free Church Institution and the General Assembly's Institution were amalgamated in 1908 into the present Scottish Churches College. The Cathedral Mission College and the London Missionary Society's Institutions have ceased to exist. But the St. Xavier's College and the Church Missionary Society's College are rendering equally valuable services.

which they respected, and by strictly avoiding any suspicion of proselytism. The second principle was that, as the funds at the disposal of the Committee were quite inadequate for any purpose of general education, the best application of them would be to high education, which was of course out of the reach of the masses and only attainable by the few. From the former principle sprung the controversy between the Anglicists and Orientalists, that grew in intensity during the first twelve years of the Committee's existence (1823-35) and was only finally settled in 1835.

The controversy between the Anglicists and Orientalists was simply whether the English language and European learning, or the Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian languages and Asiatic learning, should be the subject matter of higher education in India. Both parties admitted that the ultimate medium of instruction for the natives should be their vernacular languages; but as the vernacular literature was extremely barren, the question was what was to be the classical language and from what source were the vernaculars to be enriched.

From the constitution of the Committee it was natural that it should have been influenced from the first by a strong prejudice in favour of oriental literature. Most of its members and especially the seniors were civilians, who had distinguished themselves in the College of Fort William then in the height of its reputation; most of them were leading members of the Asiatic Society, of which the professed object was the investigation of the history and antiquities of the East, and which had disseminated in the Calcutta community a spirit of orientalism comparable only with the preference for Latin and Greek among the learned of the middle ages in Europe.<sup>10</sup> To a Committee so composed it may be well imagined that the following despatch attributed to James Mill was anything but acceptable.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> The prominent orientalists were H. Shakespear, Henry T. Prinsep and H. H. Wilson.

<sup>11</sup> James Mill and his son (John Stuart) held important posts under the East India Company. The Roman hand of both is discernible in many of the despatches of the Court of Directors.

"The ends proposed in the institution of the Hindoo College (at Benares), and the same may be affirmed of the Mahomedan, were two,—the first, to make a favourable impression, by our encouragement of their literature, upon the minds of the natives ; and the second, to promote useful learning. You acknowledge that if the plan has had any effect on the former kind, it has had none on the latter ; and you add that it must be feared that the discredit attaching to such a failure has gone far to destroy the influence which the liberality of the endowment would otherwise have had.

"We have from time to time been assured that these colleges, though they had not till then been useful, were, in consequence of proposed arrangements, just about to become so ; and we have received from you a similar prediction on the present occasion.

"We are by no means sanguine in our expectation that the slight reforms which you have proposed to introduce will be followed by much improvement and we agree with you in certain doubts, whether a greater degree of activity, even if it were produced on the part of the masters, would, in present circumstances, be attended with the most desirable results.

"With respect to the sciences, it is worse than a waste of time to employ persons either to teach or to learn them in the state in which they are found in the oriental books. As far as any historical documents may be found in the oriental languages, what is desirable is that they should be translated, and this, it is evident, will best be accomplished by Europeans who have acquired the requisite knowledge. Beyond these branches what remains in oriental literature is poetry ; but it has never been thought necessary to establish colleges for the cultivation of poetry, nor is it certain that this would be the most effectual expedient for the attainment of the end.

"In the meantime we wish you to be fully apprised of our zeal for the progress and improvement of education among the natives of India, and of our willingness to make considerable sacrifices to that important end, if proper means for the attainment of it could be pointed out to us. But we appre-

hend that the plan of the institutions, to the improvement of which our attention is now directed, was originally and fundamentally erroneous. The great end should not have been to teach Hindoo learning, but useful learning. No doubt in teaching useful learning to the Hindoos, or Mahomedans, Hindoo media or Mahomedan media, so far as they were found the most effectual, would have been proper to be employed, and Hindoo and Mahomedan prejudices would have needed to be consulted, while everything which was useful in Hindoo or Mahomedan literature it would have been proper to retain ; nor would there have been any insuperable difficulty in introducing, under these reservations, a system of instruction from which great advantage might have been derived. In professing, on the other hand, to establish seminaries for the purpose of teaching mere Hindoo or mere Mahomedan literature, you bound yourselves to teach a great deal of what was frivolous, not a little of what was purely mischievous, and a small remainder indeed in which utility was in any way concerned.

"In the new college which is to be instituted, and which we think you have acted judiciously in placing at Calcutta instead of Nuddea and Tirhoot as originally sanctioned, it will be much farther in your power, because not fettered by any preceding practice, to consult the principle of utility in the course of study which you may prescribe. Trusting that the proper degree of attention will be given to this important object we desire that an account of the plan which you approve may be transmitted to us, and that an opportunity of communicating to you our sentiments upon it may be given to us before any attempt to carry it into execution is made."

#### XIV—COMMITTEE'S REPLY TO THE STRICTURES.

To this the Committee returned an elaborate reply, especially directed against the remark that the plans of the Hindu College at Benares and Muhammadan College at Calcutta were 'originally and fundamentally erroneous,' and that in establishing seminaries for the purpose of teaching mere

Hindu or Muhammadan literature the Government 'bound themselves to teach a great deal of what was frivolous, not a little of what was purely mischievous, and a small remainder indeed in which utility was in any way concerned.'

"Under the present circumstances, therefore, on account of the still vigorous prejudices of both Mahomedans and Hindoos, and the want of available instruments for any beneficial purpose of greater extent, we conceive that it is undoubtedly necessary to make it the business of Government institutions intended for those classes respectively to teach (we hope) not long exclusively, Mahomedan and Hindoo literature and science."

The letter concluded with a learned defence of the value of Sanskrit and Arabic writings on metaphysics, mathematics, law, history, and poetry, and a respectful protest in favour of the course which the Committee had heretofore pursued. Admitting all that the Committee had urged on behalf of orientalism, there was obviously a reverse of the picture quite irrespective of the superior value of European learning. This is well shewn in an account given by Bishop Heber of a visit to the Benares Sanskrit College in 1824. The Bishop was present at a lecture on astronomy. The lecturer produced a terrestrial globe and identified Mount Hiru with the north pole, while under the southern pole he declared that the tortoise rested and supported the earth. He shewed to the young students how the Southern Hemisphere was uninhabitable; how Padalon was placed in the interior of the globe, how the sun went round the earth once in every day, and how by an equally continuous motion he visited the signs of the Zodiac. Bishop Heber concludes his account by an expression of wonder that such "rubbish" should be taught in a Government College.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> That the modern ideas of science could not be grafted on the old stock is also evident from the following account.

"Mr. Wilkinson's great efforts and success were in the Sanscrit branch of the higher class, in which the Hindoo mathematics and the Hindoo system of astronomy are adopted as the foundation of the course of study." From the Sidhants, which are wholly free from the fables of the Pooranis, and which carry the students just to that point

Even among the natives the same feeling had arisen. The views of the more advanced members of the Hindu community were very ably represented in a letter from Ram Mohun Roy, addressed in December, 1823, to Lord Amherst, on the occasion of the proposed establishment of the Sanskrit College at Calcutta. "It took twelve years of controversy, the advocacy of Macaulay, and the decisive action of a new Governor-General, before the Committee could, as a body, acquiesce in the policy urged by Ram Mohun Roy."—Howell.

#### XV—LORD AMHERST ON THE HORNS OF A DILEMMA.

This view is generally held even at the present day. A close study of the literature on the subject compels me to revise

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to which the Science of Astronomy had been carried in Europe when Copernicus, Newton and Galileo, appeared to point out and to establish that the sun and not the earth was the centre of our system, he unfolded and explained to the pupils all the principal facts of astronomy proving and illustrating the further truths of the science upon the basis afforded by those works.

Mr. Wilkinson candidly states that the first effect at least of his use of the Sidhants to expose the absurd ideas usually prevalent among Hindoos from the authority of the Poorans, was to rouse a very keen and general opposition among the Bramins in many parts of India. These are his words on the subject. "But as the class advanced, their new opinions and more especially the talented summary of them by Soobajee Bapoo<sup>13</sup> in his *Sheromuni Prukash*, which has been widely circulated, have not failed to attract the attention and bring down upon them the condemnation of the most learned Shastrees and orthodox Pundits of Oojain, Poona, Benares, Muthoor, Nagpore, and Sutara. The Oojain Pundits contended for the unadulterated Poorans, denying that the earth was a sphere and asserting that Bapoo's book was full of heterodoxy; the Muthoor Pundits, candidly, and with a keener foresight of the consequence of their study, pronounced the Sidhants and the whole Jyotish Shastrus (though acknowledged by all the Shastrus to be a Vedangu or offshoot of the sacred Vedas) to be an infidel science. The Nagpore Pundits displayed an utter ignorance of the Sidhants. The Poona and Benares Pundits admitted the truth of both the Pooranic and Siddhantic system, and maintained that their contradictions were only apparent and might be reconciled."

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<sup>13</sup> Bapoo Deva Sastri, who later on revised Wilkinson's translation of Bhaskara's *Siddhanta Siromani*.

my judgment on poor Lord Amherst ; he was at his wit's end. On the one hand, the "orientalists" had enlisted on their side the sympathy and advocacy of the orthodox Hindus who looked upon Sanskrit as *Devabhasa* (or divine language) *i.e.*, emanating from the Gods, who threatened dire consequences if its cultivation were neglected in favour of a foreign tongue. On the other hand, a few enlightened Hindus, with Ram Mohun Roy as their spokesman, demanded the introduction of Western literature and sciences. The Governor-General in Council took care to observe :

"The Committee will bear in mind that the immediate object of the institution is the cultivation of Hindu literature. Yet it is in the judgment of His Lordship in Council a purpose of much deeper interest to seek every practicable means of effecting the gradual diffusion of European knowledge. It seems indeed no unreasonable anticipation to hope that if the higher and the educated classes among the Hindus shall, through the medium of their sacred language, be imbued with a taste for European literature and science, general acquaintance with these and with the language whence they are drawn, will be as surely and as extensively communicated as by any attempt at direct instruction by other and humbler seminaries."

The following paragraph from the despatch of the Court of Directors is also worthy of record :—

"In conclusion, it is proper for us to remark to you that, adverting to the daily increasing demand for the employment of Natives in the business of the country, and in important departments of the Government, the first object of improved education should be to prepare a body of individuals for discharging public duties. It may, we trust, be expected that the intended course of education will not only produce a higher degree of intellectual fitness, but that it will contribute to raise the moral character of those who partake of its advantages, and supply you with servants to whose probity you may, with increased confidence, commit offices of trust. To this, the last and highest object of education, we expect that a large share of your attention will be applied. We desire that the discipline



of these institutions may be mainly directed towards raising among the students that rational self-esteem which is the best security against degrading vices ; and we particularly direct that the greatest pains may be taken to create habits of veracity and fidelity by inspiring the youths with a due sense of their importance and by distinguishing with the approbation of Government or its discountenance, those who do or do not possess these qualifications."

The despatch of the Court of Directors (1830) also encouraged a thorough knowledge of English among a limited number of Indian youths, so that gradually by the downward process of filtration European ideas and sentiments may permeate among the masses.

On the 29th September, 1830, the Court again addressed a remarkable despatch to the India Government, conceived in the spirit of the orders of 1824, and re-urging the importance of encouraging a thorough knowledge of English, in the conviction that the higher tone and better spirit of European literature can produce their full effect only on those who become familiar with them in original languages. While, too, it was admitted that the higher branches of science might be more advantageously studied in the languages of Europe than in translations into the oriental tongues, it was declared that the fittest persons for translating English scientific books, or for putting their substance into a shape adapted to Asiatic students, were the natives, who had studied profoundly in the original works. But English was not to be exclusively pursued.

#### XVI—SPREAD OF USEFUL KNOWLEDGE THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF VERNACULAR ALWAYS KEPT IN VIEW.

The Court strongly warned the Committee against a disposition to underrate the importance of what might be done to spread useful knowledge among the natives through the medium of books and oral instruction in their own languages. It was pointed out that the more complete education, which is to commence by a thorough study of the English language,

could be placed within the reach of a very small proportion of the natives of India ; but that intelligent natives, who had been thus educated, might, as teachers in colleges and schools, or as the writers or translators of useful books, contribute in an eminent degree to the more general extension among their countrymen of a portion of the acquirements which they had themselves gained, and might "communicate in some degree to the Native literature, and to the minds of the Native community, that improved spirit which it is to be hoped they will themselves have imbibed from the influence of European ideas and sentiments." The Government was urged to make it generally known that every qualified native, who would zealously devote himself to such a task, would be held in high honour ; that every assistance and encouragement, pecuniary or otherwise, which the case might require, would be liberally afforded ; and that no service which it was in the power of a native to render to the British Government would be more highly acceptable.

The despatch concluded with an assurance especially gratifying to the native community and deserving of special record.

#### XVII—FAMILIARITY WITH EUROPEAN LITERATURE AND SCIENCE AS A QUALIFICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT IN THE CIVIL ADMINISTRATION.

"In the meantime we wish you to be fully assured, not only of our anxiety that the judicial offices to which Natives are at present eligible should be properly filled, but of our earnest wish and hope to see them qualified for situation of higher importance and trust. There is no point of view in which we look with greater interest at the exertions you are now making for the instruction of the Natives, than as being calculated to raise up a class of persons qualified by their intelligence and morality for high employments in the civil administration of India. As the means of bringing about this most desirable object, we rely chiefly on their becoming, through a familiarity with European literature and science, imbued with the ideas and feelings of civilised Europe, on the general

cultivation of their understandings, and specially on their instruction in the principles of morals and general jurisprudence. We wish you to consider this as our deliberate view of the scope and end to which all your endeavours with respect to the education of the Natives should refer. And the active spirit of benevolence, guided by judgment, which has hitherto characterised your exertions, assures us of your ready and zealous co-operation towards an end which we have so deeply at heart."

#### XVIII—THE ORIENTALISTS—THEIR LAST RALLY—CLOSING OF THE CONTROVERSY.

Under these circumstances, a difference of opinion arose in the Committee. One section of it was for following out the existing system—for continuing the Arabic translations, the profuse patronage of Arabic and Sanskrit words, and the printing operation, by all which means fresh masses would have been added to an already unsaleable and useless hoard. The other section of the Committee wished to dispense with this cumbrous and expensive machinery for teaching English science through the medium of the Arabic language ; to give no bounties in the shape of stipends for the encouragement of any particular kind of learning, to purchase or print only such Arabic and Sanskrit books as might actually be required for the use of the different Colleges ; and to employ that portion of their annual income which would, by these means, be set free, in the establishment of new seminaries for giving instruction in English and the Vernacular languages, at the places where such institutions were most in demand.

This fundamental difference of opinion long obstructed the business of the Committee. Almost everything which came before them was more or less involved in it. The two parties were so equally balanced as to be unable to make a forward movement in any direction. A particular point might occasionally be decided by an accidental majority of one or two, but as the decision was likely to be reversed the next time the subject came under consideration, this only added inconsistency to inefficiency. This state of things lasted for about three years,

until both the parties became convinced that the usefulness and respectability of their body would be utterly compromised by its longer continuance. The Committee had come to a dead stop, and the Government alone could set it in motion again by giving a preponderance to one or the other of the two opposite sections. The members, therefore, took the only course which remained open to them, and laid before the Government a statement of their existing position, and of the grounds of the conflicting opinions held by them.

The question was fairly brought to issue, and the Government was forced to make its selection between two opposite principles.—Howell.

#### XIX—MACAULAY'S FAMOUS MINUTE OF 1835.

This stage of the controversy has a peculiar interest, not only as a turning point in the history of education in India, but because of the part taken in it by Macaulay then on the Committee, and at the same time Legislative Member of the Supreme Council. In the latter capacity Macaulay wrote a long minute replying fully to the arguments, political and educational, advanced by the Orientalists. He declared that the Government was not bound by the Act of 1813 to any particular kind of teaching, or fettered by any pledge expressed or implied, but was at liberty to employ its funds as it thought best, and that the best way of employing them was in teaching what was best worth knowing. English was better worth knowing than Sanskrit and Arabic. The natives themselves have found this out. They would pay to learn English but they required to be paid to be taught Sanskrit and Arabic and then thought themselves entitled to compensation from Government for having been engaged so long in so useless an acquisition. It was quite possible and very advantageous on every ground to make natives of India thoroughly good English scholars, and to this end the efforts of the Committee should be directed.

The minute, distinguished by the brilliancy of style, the profuse illustration and incisive logic peculiar to the author, concluded with a distinct declaration that if the present system were permitted to remain unchanged, the writer would resign his seat on the Committee. The Governor-General, Lord William Bentinck, briefly endorsed his entire concurrence in Mr. Macaulay's views.

*"His Lordship in Council is of opinion that the great object of the British Government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science among the Natives of India ; and that all the funds appropriated for the purposes of education would be best employed on English education alone."*

On the receipt of this order the Committee resolved that henceforth "schools for the teaching of English literature and science through the medium of the English language should be established in the principal towns in the Presidencies of Fort William and Agra, as funds become available and as school masters can be procured."

Thus the new policy was accepted, and still remains practically unchanged, having received authoritative confirmation in the despatch of 1854. The closing of the controversy was signalled by the accession to the Committee of the first two Indian members, Radhakanta Deva and Rasamaya Datta, who in common with the more advanced of the native community, entirely approved of the Resolution. But the order naturally excited the greatest dissatisfaction among the advocates of the opposite views. The President of the Committee, Mr. Shakespear, and two of the leading members, at once tendered their resignations. The Literary Society of Calcutta, almost entirely composed of Orientalists, loudly and un-animously condemned the order. The Asiatic Society took up the quarrel and resolved to strongly memorialise the Court of Directors against the "destructive, unjust, unpopular, and impolitic Resolution, not far outdone by the destruction of the Alexandrine Library itself."—*Proc. Asiatic Soc.*, 1835.

## XX—MACAULAY NOT ORIGINATOR OF ENGLISH EDUCATION.

Howell and Duff have been quoted above to prove that "English education was in a manner forced upon the British Government: it did not spontaneously originate it." It is rather curious to note that even those English authors who have written from a philosophic stand-point on India have fallen into the error of supposing that Macaulay was responsible for originating English education.

"When we decided, mainly under influence of Macaulay, to impart to the people of India a modern and largely Western education, we settled for good or ill the character, and to some extent the pace, of their social and political development. Macaulay prepared our minds for this 'proudest day in English history,' and it has come."—Dilke : *Problems of Greater Britain*, Vol. II, p. 100.

"Could Macaulay really fancy it possible to teach two hundred and fifty millions of Asiatics English? Probably not, probably he thought only of creating a small learned class. \* \* \* But if India is really to be enlightened, evidently it must be through the medium neither of Sanscrit nor of English, but of the Vernaculars, that is Hindustani, Hindi, Bengali &c."—Seeley : *Expansion of England*, p. 253.

An English educationist disposes of the above erroneous notion curtly :

"Macaulay by his eloquence and wealth of superlatives has often been made solely responsible for cutting off Indian education from the roots of national life. Let it be remembered here that he was not the prime mover, that his intervention was late and that the forces which he represented would probably have been successful without his singularly tactless and blundering championship. The movement towards Anglicisation originated in Missionary and Hindu quarters before Macaulay had begun to sharpen his pen and select his epithets in the land of 'exile' whose culture he was to traduce. And it was fostered by Hindu support for many years after he had left India. Far more important than that 'master of superlatives'.

was Ram Mohun Roy, whose antecedents, career, and aspirations won for him friends among reformers and missionaries alike, and enabled him to unite these bodies against the common enemy."—Arthur Mayhew: *The Education of India*, pp. 12-13.

Macaulay and Duff advocated English as a medium to the select youths of India only during the *transitional period*. The following extracts from Duff's writings will make it abundantly clear.

Writing of this period [1834-35] Duff declared: "I saw clearly and expressed myself strongly to the effect that ultimately, in a generation or two, the Bengalee, by improvement, might become the fitting medium of European knowledge. But at that time it was but a poor language, like English before Chaucer, and had in it, neither by translation nor original composition, no works embodying any subjects of study beyond the merest elements.

"Who, then, will hesitate in affirming that, in the meantime, the Government has acted wisely in appointing the English language as the medium of communicating English literature and science to the select youth of India? And who will venture to say that the wisdom of the act would be diminished if it guaranteed the continuance of English as the medium *until the living spoken dialects of India became ripened, by the copious infusion of expressive terms, for the formation of a new and improved national literature?*"—George Smith: *The Life of Alexander Duff*.

## XXI—CONCLUSION.

"Before we conclude this chapter, we must not, however, forget to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's. We yield to none in our admiration for Macaulay, whom we may almost style the father of high education in India. But when Macaulay had not even been elected a fellow of Trinity College,<sup>14</sup> Ram Mohun Roy had sent a pathetic appeal to the representative of the British nation, which extorted the admiration and drew forth the encomium of Bishop Heber<sup>15</sup>; and there are passages in it which are almost interchangeable with those

which occur in Macaulay's minute. Engaged in the tedious and protracted Burmese War, Lord Amherst could not afford to trouble himself much about the intellectual progress of the Indian people. Ram Mohun Roy's voice was thus as that of one crying in the wilderness. Not even an official intimation was vouchsafed to him that attention should be given to his memorial.<sup>18</sup> It is perhaps a sign of human weakness that we are apt to give more credit to one who, no less by disinterested zeal than by a fortuitous concourse of events, brings a movement to a successful issue, than to one who, amidst comparative darkness, takes the initiative. We do not know which of the two to admire most—the Indian or the Englishman—Ram Mohun Roy or Macaulay.'—*India* (1886).

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<sup>11</sup> Trinity College, Cambridge, Oct. 1, 1834—My dear father: I was elected Fellow this morning.—Trevelyan's *Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay*, Vol. 1, p. 107.

<sup>12</sup> "Rammohun Roy, a learned Native . . . remonstrated against the system (Brahminical education) last year in a paper which he sent me to be put into Lord Amherst's hands, and which for its good English, good sense, and forcible arguments, is a real curiosity as coming from an Asiatic."—Heber's *Journal*.

*Cf.*—"In order to enable Your Lordship to appreciate the utility of encouraging such imaginary learning as above characterised (e.g. the Vedanth, etc.) I beg Your Lordship will be pleased to compare the state of science and literature in Europe before the time of Lord Bacon with the progress of knowledge since he wrote."—Ram Mohun Roy.

<sup>13</sup> It is scarcely fair to hold that Ram Mohun's letter received but scant justice at the hands of Lord Amherst; in fact, he forwarded it to the Education Committee for their opinion. A copy of it was also evidently sent to the Court of Directors. Howell very properly suggests that James Mill himself was influenced by it as is proved by internal evidence and by reference to dates.



## CHAPTER II.

### MASS EDUCATION AND CREATION OF VERNACULAR LITERATURE.

There is no doubt that from time immemorial indigenous schools have existed in the country. In Bengal alone, in 1835, Mr. Adam estimated their number to be 100,000.<sup>1</sup> In Madras, upon an enquiry instituted by Sir Thomas Munro in 1822, the number of schools was reported to be 12,498 containing 188,650 scholars, and in Bombay about the same period schools of a similar order were found to be scattered all over the Presidency. But although all authorities were agreed that the existence of these schools was a satisfactory evidence of a general desire for education, there was equal unanimity that the instruction actually imparted in them was, owing partly to the utter incompetence of the teachers, the absence of all school books and appliances, and the early age at which the children were withdrawn, almost worthless. Still it is much to be regretted that, as each Province fell under British rule, the Government did not take advantage of the prestige of conquest or gratitude for delivery from war and oppression which were strong in the popular mind, to make the village school an important feature in the village system that was almost everywhere transmitted to us. Had this been done, and had the numerous village allowances been diverted to this object, and had the Government devoted itself to the improvement of school books and schoolmasters, instead of establishing a few new schools of its

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<sup>1</sup> Max Müller, on the strength of official documents and a missionary report concerning education in Bengal prior to the British occupation, asserts that there were then 80,000 native schools in Bengal, or one for every 400 of the population. Ludlow, in his *History of British India*, says that "in every Hindoo village which has retained its old form I am assured that the children generally are able to read, write and cipher, but where we have swept away the village system, as in Bengal, there the village school has also disappeared."—*Prabashi*, Bhadra, 1341, pp. 754-755.

own and thereby encouraging the belief that it was for the State, and not for the community, to look after education, the work of general improvement would have been substituted for the work of partial construction, and we should now have had in every Province a really adequate system of national primary education. Sir Thomas Munro aimed at this in Madras, as did Mountstuart Elphinstone in Bombay, and Lord William Bentinck in Bengal, "but their views were over-ridden by men who, if less far-seeing, were more persistent."

Howell, in the above remarks, I am afraid, does injustice to the "men who, if less far-seeing, were more persistent," as he himself admits that "the instruction imparted in the village schools was almost worthless;" he might have added that it was hopelessly out of date and did more harm than good and to raise the indigenous schools above the traditional level would have been to "improve them off the face of the earth."

The extract from the *Life and Times of Ramtanu Lahiri* by Sivanath Sastri (translated by Sir Roper Lethbridge) quoted below will show the utter futility of making the existing village school an important feature of national mass education.

"Here we find it necessary to say a few words about the constitution and management of *Patshalas*, as they then existed. It usually happened that some of the Kayasthas of the Burdwan District, pinched by poverty, left their homes in quest of bread, and failing to find other employments, established themselves as teachers for the young in different parts of the country. They were called *Gurumahasais* (village pedagogues); and the apologies for our modern vernacular schools, which they started, were called *patshalas*."

If mass education were to be developed on right lines, the enrichment of the vernacular was an absolute necessity, and the pioneering efforts of the Serampore missionaries in this connection deserve the highest praise.

In 1816 Mr. Marshman, stimulated by the encouragement he had received from Lord Moira, began to entertain wider views on the extension of education, and published a pamphlet, called 'Hints relative to Native Schools,' which is

remarkable for its advocacy of vernacular education for the masses, and of many of the principles afterwards authoritatively enunciated in the great educational despatch of 1854. Mr. Marshman's views were warmly taken up and supported by the public and by the Governor-General, who sent a contribution of rupees 500, and even by the Indians, as represented by Ram Mohun Roy, the great Hindu reformer and founder of the Brahmo Samaj, and Dwarkanath Tagore, then representatives of the most advanced section of native society.

### I—CAREY'S GREAT SERVICES.

The appointment of Carey to the Professorship of Bengali and Sanskrit in the College of Fort William was of special significance, as to his efforts in this noble institution, we owe the dawn of Bengali prose. It is gratifying to note that Dr. S. K. De in his *Bengali Literature in the Nineteenth Century* has done ample justice to the claims of Carey in this field as will be clear from the following extracts :

"He found the appointment bringing in its train responsible duties but it afforded him an early opportunity not only to cultivate 'the beautiful language of Bengal' but also to enrich its literature by his own labours as well as by the labours of others whom he induced to work in the same field. He himself not only wrote a grammar, compiled a dictionary and composed text-books but he was at the same time the centre of the learned Bengalis, whom by his zeal he attracted round him as *pundits* and *munsis*, as inquirers and visitors. The impetus which he gave to Bengali learning is to be measured not merely by his productions or by his educational labours at this institution or at Sreerampur but also by the influence he had exerted and the example he had set before an admiring public who soon took up his work in earnestness. He had gathered round him a number of scholars who were at first his teachers but whom he had succeeded in employing in extensive literary work. Of the fifteen *munsis* who taught Bengali in the College, the Chief was his own *pundit*, Mrityunjay, who wrote some of the most learned and elaborate treatises of the time. He induced three other *pundits* of the College, Ram Basu, Rajiblochan and Chandicharan, to undertake the composition of vernacular works and he always befriended those who took any interest in the vernacular literature. \* \* \* Thus, although the College of Fort William was founded to fulfil a political mission, its usefulness and its importance never ended there. The

impetus which it gave, as a centre of learning and culture, to the cause of vernacular language and literature, gives it a prominent place in the literary history of the time. No doubt its greatest achievement in the history of intellectual progress in this country consists in its revival of the ancient culture of the land, its all-comprehensive orientalism daring far beyond the intrepid dreams of scholars like Sir William Jones, Wilkins, and Colebrooke. But this orientalism embraced a great deal more than a mere revival of classical learning. Attention hitherto had never been turned to vernacular learning in this country which was in a sadly neglected state at the beginning of the century. The College of Fort William, by its encouragement of the vernacular, first brought it into public notice and fostered and nourished it."

## II—THE CALCUTTA SCHOOL BOOK SOCIETY—THE CALCUTTA SCHOOL SOCIETY.

"In 1817 the Calcutta School Book Society was established ; it was intended to supply, under prime cost, useful elementary books for the schools then springing up on all sides. In 1821 this society received an annual grant of Rs. 6,000/-, which it still (1871) enjoys." The same year is remarkable for Lord Hastings' (Governor-General, 1813-23) public declaration at the annual convocation of the College of Fort William, that the strength of the Indian Government would not be based on the ignorance but on the enlightenment of the people, and that it would be treason against British sentiment to imagine any other principle of government. The declaration has been often repeated, but its first enunciation, as contrasting strongly with the Parliamentary decision of 1793, may be justly recorded.

The year 1819 was marked by the establishment of the Calcutta School Society. This Society was formed for the purpose of establishing Native schools, first in Calcutta and its vicinity, and then throughout the country to the utmost extent of its resources. It also contemplated the improvement of the indigenous schools by the introduction into them of the useful publications of the School Book Society, and by the preparation of teachers to whom might be entrusted the future management of the schools of various descriptions which were or might be established. In 1823 the resources of this Society were found to be incommensurate with its object, an application was made

to the Government for pecuniary aid, which was afforded to them upon the same principles, and to the same annual amount, as had been granted to the School Book Society.<sup>2</sup>

"This grant was sanctioned by the Court of Directors in a despatch which deserves to be recorded as the first recognition on the part of the Home Government of the claims of education for the masses and of the best means of attempting it."—Howell.

"We recently sanctioned a grant of similar amount to the Calcutta School Book Society, and on the same grounds we have no hesitation in sanctioning the present grant. The Calcutta School Society appears to combine with its arrangements for giving elementary instruction, an arrangement of still greater importance for educating teachers for the indigenous schools. This last object we may deem worthy of great encouragement, since it is upon the character of the indigenous schools that the education of the great mass of the population must ultimately depend. By training up, therefore, a class of teachers, you provide for the eventual extension of improved education to a portion of the Natives of India, far exceeding that which any elementary instruction that could be immediately bestowed would have any chance of reaching."

### III—THE CALCUTTA COMMITTEE AND VERNACULAR LITERATURE.

It has already been mentioned that in 1835, the Anglicists triumphed with the help of Macaulay, and His Lordship in Council (Bentinck) expressed the opinion that the object of the British Government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science among the natives of India and all funds appropriated for the purpose of education would be best employed on English education alone.

Upon one point, however, there can be no question that, whatever was the intention of the Government, this Resolution went somewhat beyond it, in that it barred any expenditure on vernacular teaching, notwithstanding that both parties admitted

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<sup>2</sup> The School Book Society was abolished a few years ago as it had long outlived its purpose.

the necessity of encouraging the vernaculars, and only disputed about the subject matter and medium of higher education. Indeed, in Madras, the immediate result was the prohibition of the use of the vernacular languages as media of instruction in any Government schools, and the employment of Government funds on English education exclusively. The Calcutta Committee were, however, necessarily better informed of the real object of the Resolution, and in acknowledging it in the report for the year "as an epoch in the history of our Committee in which a well-defined principle of action has for the first time been prescribed to us," they remarked as follows :

"We are deeply sensible of the importance of encouraging the cultivation of the vernacular languages. We do not conceive that the order of the 7th of March precludes us from doing this, and we have constantly acted on this construction. In the discussions which preceded that order, the claims of the vernacular languages were broadly and prominently admitted by all parties, and the question submitted for the decision of Government only concerned the relative advantage of teaching English on the one side, and the learned Eastern languages on the other. We, therefore, conceive that the phrases "European literature and science," "English education alone," and "imparting to the Native population a knowledge of English literature and science through the medium of the English language" are intended merely to secure the preference to European learning taught through the medium of the English language, over Oriental learning taught through the medium of the Sanskrit and Arabic languages, as regards the instruction of those Natives who receive a learned education at our seminaries. These expressions have, as we understand them, no reference to the question through what ulterior medium such instruction, as the mass of the people is capable of receiving, is to be conveyed. If English had been rejected and the learned Eastern tongues adopted, the people must equally have received their knowledge through the vernacular dialects. It was, therefore, quite unnecessary for the Government, in deciding the question between the rival languages, to take any notice of the vernacular tongues, and consequently we have thought that nothing could reasonably be inferred from its omission to take such notice.

"We conceive the formation of a vernacular literature to be the ultimate object to which all our efforts must be directed. At present, the extensive cultivation of some foreign language, which is always very improving to the mind, is rendered indispensable by the almost total absence of a vernacular literature, and the consequent impossibility of

obtaining a tolerable education from that source only. The study of English, to which many circumstances induce the Natives to give the preference, and with it the knowledge of the learning of the West, is therefore, daily spreading. This, as it appears to us, is the first stage in the process by which India is to be enlightened. The natives must learn before they can teach. The best educated among them must be placed in possession of our knowledge, before they can transfer it into their own language. We trust that the number of such translations will now multiply every year. As the superiority of European learning becomes more generally appreciated, the demand for them will no doubt increase, and we shall be able to encourage any good books which may be brought out in the Native languages by adopting them extensively in our seminaries.

"A teacher of the Vernacular language of the Province is already attached to several of our institutions, and we look to this plan soon becoming general. We have also endeavoured to secure the means of judging for ourselves of the degree of attention which is paid to this important branch of instruction, by requiring that the best translations from English into the Vernacular language, and *vice versa*, should be sent to us after each annual examination, and if they seem to deserve it, a pecuniary prize is awarded by us to the authors of them."

#### IV—THE CALCUTTA COMMITTEE AND MASS EDUCATION.

The great dispute being settled, the Committee now began to turn its attention to other subjects including the question of the wider diffusion of education among the masses of the people. The views of the Committee on this point have been already explained, but in the report for the year, "I (Howell) find it declared that they were desirous to establish, if funds would admit, an elementary school for vernacular instruction in every district in the country, as a measure intimately connected with the improvement of vernacular literature."

"The improvement of the vernacular literature, however, is most intimately connected with the measure of establishing a system of really national education which shall in time embrace every village in the country. Should the series of reports, on which Mr. Adam is now engaged, lead to such a plan being even partially acted upon, the demand for improved school books in the vernacular languages will then be such as to call for our utmost exertions to supply them. We have already received propositions from Delhi, Agra, and Saugor, for establish-

ing village schools, but we considered the agitation of the subject at present premature. Before we can successfully adopt any plan for this purpose, much larger means must be placed at our disposal, and a much larger number of qualified schoolmasters and translators must be raised up. The first of these desiderata does not depend upon us, but the last is every day approaching nearer to attainment. Our existing institutions form the nucleus of a much more general system of education, and they will ere long become capable of being extended to any degree that may be desired by the formation of district schools in connection with them."

Mr. Adam came to the country as a missionary, and the fact that he was deputed by the Government to make enquiries into the state and requirements of popular education requires a few words of explanation.

It had, indeed, now become apparent to the Governor-General, though not to the Committee of Public Instruction, that if the Government were to recognise the duty of attempting a system of national education in a country so densely populated as India, and when all the available funds were limited to a little more than one lakh of rupees annually, it was necessary to utilise to the utmost every kind of indigenous institution so as to make the Government contribution go as far as possible. Hence it was desirable to ascertain what these institutions were ; what instruction was given in them ; how they were maintained, and how they were regarded by the people. This is the duty for which Lord William Bentinck in 1835 selected and deputed Mr. Adam. Mr. Adam spent three years in the enquiry, and submitted three very elaborate reports, the last of which is dated the 28th April, 1838.

#### V—ADAM'S REPORT.

Mr. Adam found that the desire to give education to their male children was deeply seated in the minds even of the humblest classes of Bengal, and that the machinery was as follows :—

"The education of Bengalee children generally commences when they are five or six years old, and terminates in five years, before the mind can be fully awakened to a sense of the advantages of knowledge or the reason sufficiently matured to



acquire it. The teachers depend entirely upon their scholars for subsistence, and being little respected and poorly rewarded, there is no encouragement for persons of character, talent or learning to engage in the occupation. These schools are generally held in the houses of some of the most respectable Native inhabitants or very near them. All the children of the family are educated in the vernacular language of the country, and in order to increase the emoluments of the teachers, they are allowed to introduce, as pupils, as many respectable children as they can procure in the neighbourhood. The scholars are entirely without instruction, both literary and oral, regarding the personal virtues and domestic and social duties. The teacher in virtue of his character, or in the way of advice or reproof, exercises no moral influence on the character of his pupils. For the sake of pay, he performs a menial service in the spirit of a menial. On the other hand, there is no text or school-book used containing any moral truths or liberal knowledge, so that education being limited entirely to accounts, tends rather to narrow the mind and confine its attention to sordid gain, than to improve the heart and enlarge the understanding. This description applies, as far as I at present know, to all indigenous elementary schools throughout Bengal."

"Mr. Adam's picture of the indigenous schools in Bengal would have applied with almost equal truth to those of the rest of India, and affords a satisfactory assurance that whatever may be the shortcomings of our present system, it is very far in advance of that which it superseded. While, therefore, it will be regretted that the native system should have been superseded instead of being improved, it must still be borne in mind, that instead of schools where the instruction was entirely confined to accounts, 'tending to narrow the mind and confine its attention to sordid gain,' instead of colleges (*kolis* for imparting Sanskrit learning) where five or six choice pupils out of a hundred thousand would be advanced to the mystery of philosophical asceticism, our schools attempt to give all that is now understood by a sound elementary education and our colleges are tested by university standards that do not fall short of what is required of the students at Oxford or Cambridge. There was one point, indeed, in which the indigenous system excelled that which is succeeding it. The indigenous schools were planted all over the country and were closely interwoven with the habits and customs of the people, and to this our system has not yet attained."

## VI—SUBSTITUTION OF VERNACULAR FOR PERSIAN.

Another reform of much importance was introduced about this time in connection with education. It has been said that if French had continued to be the State language of England during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the language of Milton and Burke would have remained a rustic dialect without a literature, grammar or orthography ; and this is somewhat analogous to the weight that attached to the study of the vernaculars and to the creation of a vernacular literature in the Bengal Presidency, when Persian was the language of the law courts and of official correspondence.

"His Lordship in Council (Lord Auckland, 1837) strongly feels it to be just and reasonable, that those Judicial and Fiscal Proceedings on which the dearest interests of the Indian people depend, should be conducted in a language which they understand."

This Resolution was followed by Act XXIX passed on the 20th November, 1837, and is still in force. It enabled the Governor-General in Council to dispense with the Persian language in judicial or revenue proceedings, and to delegate the dispensing power to any subordinate authority ; and it was immediately acted upon. All these proceedings received the entire approbation of the Court of Directors in the following year.

## VII—LORD AUCKLAND AND MASS EDUCATION.

Upon the question of education for the masses, Lord Auckland concurred with the principle steadily maintained by the Committee that the efforts of the Government ought to be first directed upon the higher and middle classes. Still elementary education for the mass of the people was not necessarily to be neglected or indefinitely postponed ; but, he added, "the hope of acting immediately and powerfully on the poor peasantry of India is certainly far from being strong with me." Lord Auckland's policy obviously involved additional expenditure, and in December, 1840, an extra lakh and a-half

of rupees was added to the annual grant which then amounted to Rs. 4,86,688/- for the year.<sup>3</sup> Of this sum three-and-a-half lakhs were appropriated to the existing colleges and schools and to the other charges of the Department ; and it was in contemplation to devote the remaining income to the establishment of a chair of civil engineering, and another of law or natural philosophy in the Hindu College. By these means the Government was enabled to support six colleges containing 2,117 students, 18 English schools with 2,434 students, and vernacular schools in Bengal, Behar, Cuttack, and Assam, including the schools attached to the Hindu College, at all of which 2,007 youths were then receiving instruction in their own language.

The Committee continued to maintain the policy prescribed in the resolution of March, 1835, as modified by the subsequent order of Lord Auckland in 1839, and thus described in the report for 1840—41 : "Our object is," they said, "to promote the highest efficiency in the vernacular and oriental languages and literature in every practicable way compatible with the due regard to the superior importance of the cultivation of the English language and literature, and the deeper and more lasting benefits the latter are capable of imparting."

The year 1844 was remarkable for a resolution, designed apparently by Mr. Halliday, and issued by Lord Hardinge three months after his accession to the Governor-Generalship. The object of the order was to throw open the public service to qualified young men from the various educational institutions.

The Resolution gave a great stimulus at the time to the cause of English education, and was received with much satisfaction by the European and Indian community.

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<sup>3</sup> The extra grant was sanctioned by the Court of Directors in response to a piteous appeal from which we quote the following lines :—

"In the Bengal Presidency, with its immense territory and a revenue of above 13 millions sterling, the yearly expenditure of the Government on this account is little in excess of £24,000 or 2,40,000 rupees, and I need not say how in a country like India it is to the Government that the population must mainly look for facilities in the acquisition of improved learning."—*Minute by Lord Auckland.*

## VIII—PROPOSAL FOR FOUNDING A UNIVERSITY IN CALCUTTA.

The most important event in the following year (1845) was the submission by the Council to Government of a project for a Central University in Calcutta. The ground of the proposal, for which the Council appears to have been mainly indebted to its Secretary, Dr. Mouat, was thus stated :—

“The present advanced state of education in the Bengal Presidency, with the large and annual increasing number of highly-educated pupils, both in public and private institutions, renders it not only expedient and advisable, but a matter of strict justice and necessity, to confer upon them some mark of distinction, by which they may be recognised as persons of liberal education and enlightened minds, capable, from the literary and scientific training they have undergone, of entering at once upon the active duties of life ; of commencing the practical pursuit of the learned professions, including in this description the business of instructing the rising generation ; of holding the higher offices under Government open to Natives after due official qualification ; or of taking the rank in society accorded in Europe to all members and graduates of the Universities.

“The only means of accomplishing this great object is by the establishing of a Central University, armed with the power of granting degrees in arts, sciences, law, medicine and civil engineering, incorporated by a special Act of the Legislative Council of India, and endowed with the privileges enjoyed by all chartered Universities in Great Britain and Ireland.

“After carefully studying the laws and constitutions of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, with those of the recently established University of London, the latter alone appears adapted to the wants of the Native community.”

It will have been seen from the foregoing narrative, that steadily, and by deliberate conviction, the Government and the educational authorities of Lower Bengal had been working zealously in the interest of higher education ; and that as a crown to the structure, a project for a Central University had

been proposed before there was any foundation of general education among the people.

#### IX—FAILURE OF THE MOSLEMS.

In the report of 1851-52, there is a notice of "the continued failure of all our efforts to impart a high order of English education to the Muhammadan community," and on the 4th August, 1853, the Council laid before the Government their views *in extenso* upon the required reform.

"The great object of Mr. Warren Hastings in founding the Madrassa, was to qualify the Mahommedans of Bengal for the public service, chiefly in the Courts of Justice, and to enable them to compete, on more equal terms with the Hindus, for employment under Government.

"The Council are far from thinking that this is the only or the highest object for which the mental cultivation of the upper orders of Muhammadans in Bengal ought to be encouraged by the Government of the country. But it is certainly an important and legitimate object.

"Looking first at this object, the Council believe that the institution, when it was founded, was well calculated to attain it. But as the institution has undergone no real improvement of importance since its foundation seventy-one years ago it would be strange if it were still equally well calculated to attain that object, when the time that has passed has worked such vast changes in the nature and requirements of the public service, in the constitution and the procedure of the Courts of Law, and in the temper and habits of the people. That which in the last century was perhaps hardly thought desirable has become necessary. That to the accomplishment of which, if the Government had desired it, the prejudices of the people would then have opposed insuperable obstacle, is now acknowledged as a popular want.

"The use of Persian has ceased in the Courts of Law and in all the offices of Government, whilst a good knowledge

of English has become more and more useful to candidates for employment, whether public or private. What is now the most useful education that can be given to fit a young man for respectable employment in the public service, is sound instruction in English, in the vernaculars, and in that knowledge which, with very rare exceptions, may be best acquired from books in the English language.

"The Madrassa is believed to be a very fit, as it certainly is a very convenient place, in which to originate this Anglo-Persian scheme of study. It is a place of learning which the Mahomedans regard as devoted to their exclusive benefit ; it is held in great respect and repute throughout Bengal, and it is freely resorted to by Mahomedans from all parts of the Presidency.

"In addition to English and Persian, it should contain the means of instructions in Hindoostanee, and Bengalee, the one being the domestic language of the Mahomedans all over India, and the other being the vernacular language of this Province.

"The Council would cease entirely from attempts to teach the physical sciences in the Arabic language. If these sciences are taught from Arabic books as at present, a great mass of error and absurdity is taught as if it were truth and reason ; and, at the best progressive sciences are taught, as if they had made no progress for some two thousand years. Science ought not, the Council hold, to be thus taught by any Government."

#### X—CONVERSION OF THE HINDU COLLEGE INTO THE PRESIDENCY COLLEGE.

In the letter that proposed the reform of the Madrassa, the Council urged upon the Government "the want at the metropolis of British India of a Government College, such as is provided at many much less important places, where a higher course of English education can be pursued, open to all, whether they happen to be Hindus of certain high castes or not." The Muhammadans had their Madrassa and the Hindus their Sanskrit College for instruction respectively in Muhammadan and Sanskrit literature ; and the Hindus of the

higher castes had also their own College, the Vidyalaya, the foundation of which has been described above. But there was, as yet, in Calcutta no institution that would meet the growing want described by the Council. The proposal of the Council was to obtain the concurrence of the founders and patrons of the Vidyalaya, and then to throw open the college department of it to the general community as the Government College of the metropolis of India. In reply, Lord Dalhousie admitted all the arguments of the Council, but to effect the object in view, suggested a plan which was at once more free from the objection which the founders and patrons of the Vidyalaya would not unnaturally entertain to the abolition of the exclusive character of the Hindu College. The Governor-General's scheme was the establishment at Calcutta of a new general College, called the Presidency College, as distinguished from all merely local and private institutions. A fitting edifice was to be built for it ; no student was to be admitted who had not passed the junior scholarship standard ; but with this restriction the college was to be open to all youths of every caste, class or creed. Thus, while the Sanskrit College would enable the Hindu student to pursue the higher branches of Hindu teaching, the reformed Madrasa would do the same for the Muhammadan student, and both these classes of young men and of every other class, would have offered to them instruction in every branch of general education in the new Presidency College.

The Council of Education warmly accepted Lord Dalhousie's scheme. The Hindu College was merged in the new institution with the full concurrence of the Bengali proprietors, whose memory was to be perpetuated by a number of scholarships.

All these arrangements were approved by the Court of Directors, in a despatch, from which the following extract deserves to be recorded :—

Your letter refers to a scheme for the establishment of a Presidency College at Calcutta, prepared by the Council of Education, adopted by

the late Governor of Bengal, and strongly recommended for our sanction by your Government.

The scheme originated in a proposal by the Council of Education for throwing open the Hindu College to all classes of the community, irrespective of religious difference. Certain objections, however, to that course were pointed out by the Governor in a minute conceived in a comprehensive and liberal spirit, and His Lordship having indicated the mode in which the object might be accomplished, referred the subject for the further consideration of the Council. The difficulties arising from the peculiar circumstances of the Hindu College having been removed by the voluntary act of the Native hereditary and elected Governors of that institution, the Council were enabled to submit a scheme by which the principal portion of the Hindu College establishment was made available for the formation of a general Presidency College, while at the same time all proper consideration was shown for the special claims of the Hindu community.

Before proceeding further, we desire to express our entire approval of your intention to commemorate the connection of the founders of the College with the progress of learning in India by suitable inscriptions either in the Hindu College itself or in the proposed Presidency College, as well as by the allotment of the funds which remain of the original donations to the foundation of scholarships to be held by Hindus at the Presidency College. We would, however, suggest that it would be of a greater benefit to the Hindu community, and as much in accordance with the views of the original donors, were some at least of these scholarships to be open to Hindu competitors educated at other seminaries of Calcutta or its vicinity, and not confined to the students of the Hindu College.

#### XI—FOUNDATION OF THE MEDICAL COLLEGE.

Besides the decision of the controversy between the Anglicists and Orientalists, Lord Bentinck's administration was remarkable for another great educational reform. In 1833 he appointed a Committee to report on the existing state of native medical knowledge. The report resulted in a general order directing that the Native Medical Institution<sup>4</sup> at Calcutta, and the medical classes at the Sanskrit College<sup>5</sup> and at the

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<sup>4</sup> Established in 1822 to supply a superior class of native doctors for the civil and military services.

<sup>5</sup> "The students belonging to the medical caste of the Hindus (Vaidya) have the choice, instead of entering the class of logic, to attend



Madrasa, should be abolished, and that a new institution should be established in which medical science was to be taught on European principles through the medium of English.

"We would very respectfully submit to your Lordship in Council our serious opinion that the best mode of fulfilling the great ends under consideration, is for the State to found a Medical College for the education of the natives, in which the various branches of medical science cultivated in Europe should be taught, and as near as possible, on the most approved European system. . . . A knowledge of the English language we consider as the *sine qua non*, because that language contains within itself the circle of all the sciences."—(Extract from the Report of the Committee of 1833).

This decision, which appeared at the very crisis of the controversy, was of course vehemently assailed, but happily without effect, by the Orientalists. And it had also to encounter more serious obstacles. It was a grave question whether a Hindu class could be formed at all to study European medical science in opposition to all tradition and experience, and whether the study of anatomy, and especially the practice of dissection, would not be insuperably opposed to the strong prejudices of caste. It was also questionable whether a number of youths could be found with a sufficient knowledge of English and sufficient general education to profit by the proposed instruction; and whether, after all other objections had been removed, the stipends offered by Government would be adequate to attract students of the new science. All these difficulties were overcome by the tact and energy of the Principal,

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the medical lectures of the Sanskrit as well as of the English lecturer on medicine, and they do not study the law. As their object is to follow the profession of their fathers, they cannot but wish to acquaint themselves with the Hindu practice of physic and with the sorts of medicines most easily obtainable and most generally used in this country, on which account the study of Sanskrit medical books becomes indispensable to this class.

"Being acquainted with them only as a Superintendent of their Sanskrit learning, I feel great pleasure in hearing testimony that some of the best Sanskrit scholars of the college belong to the medical class."

Dr. Bramley, ably assisted by Mr. David Hare, whose exertions on behalf of the Hindu College and the cause of education generally have been already recorded.

The College was opened in June, 1835, with Dr. M. J. Bramley as Principal or Superintendent, and Dr. H. H. Goodeve and W. B. O'Shaughnessy as professors.

The second course of lectures in the College commenced in October, 1835, when dissection was first introduced. The following graphic description of this event was given by Mr. J. E. D. Bethune on the occasion of his presenting to the College a portrait of Madhusudan Gupta who made the first attempt to dissect a dead body :

"I have had the scene described to me. It had needed some time, some exercise of the persuasive art, before Madhusudan could bend up his mind to the attempt; but having once taken the resolution, he never flinched or swerved from it.

"At the appointed hour, scalpel in hand, Madhusudan followed Dr. Goodeve into the godown where the body lay ready. The other students deeply interested in what was going forward but strongly agitated with mingled feelings of anxiety and alarm, crowded after them, but durst not enter the building where this fearful deed was to be perpetrated. They clustered round the doors, peeped through the Jhilmils, resolved at least to have ocular proof of its accomplishment. And when Madhusudan's knife held with a strong and steady hand made a deep incision in the breast, the lookers-on drew a long gasping breath like men relieved from the weight of some intolerable suspense."

In the great Ayurvedic work, *Susruta*, dissection of dead bodies of animals is enjoined for the study of anatomy. The following extract from my *History of Hindu Chemistry* (1902) will not be out of place here :

"In ancient India the useful arts and sciences as distinguished from mere handicrafts were cultivated by the higher classes. Unfortunately a knowledge of these perished with the institution of the caste system in its most rigid form. In the Vedic age, the Rishis or the priests did not form an exclusive caste of their own but followed different professions according to their convenience or natural taste, thus fulfilling the idea laid down by Emerson, "Has man not a calling in his character? Each man has his own vocation; the talent is the call." But all this was changed when the Brahmins reasserted their supremacy on the decline

of Buddhism. The caste system was established *de novo* in a more rigid form. The drift of Manu and of later Puranas is in the direction of glorifying the priestly class which set up most arrogant pretensions. According to the *Susruta*, the dissection of dead bodies is indispensable to the students of surgery and this high authority lays particular stress on knowledge gained from experiment and observation and not on mere speculation, but Manu would have none of it. The very touch of a dead body according to Manu is enough to bring contamination to the sacred person of a Brahmin. Thus we find that shortly after the time of Bagvata the handling of a lancet was discouraged and anatomy and surgery fell into disuse and became to all intents and purposes a lost science to the Hindus."

## XII—CHARTER OF INDIAN EDUCATION.

On the occasion of the fourth renewal of the Company's Charter (1853), the evidence of a host of Indian celebrities was taken before Select Committees. With regard to the funds that the Government should devote to the purpose, Mr. Halliday considered that no limit could be assigned to them. "I should desire to treat the subject liberally, and to consider it a very important branch of the Government expenditure, and to be ready to lay out upon it at all times as much money as could possibly be afforded." And as to the spread of education being dangerous to the British Government, Mr. Halliday thought that there was no danger whatever.

"On the contrary," he said, "it appears to me that the spread of education must assist the Government. The educated classes, I think, feel themselves, and must feel themselves more bound to us, and as having more in common with us than they have with their uneducated countrymen, apart from the general fact that it is more easy to govern a people who have acquired a knowledge of good and evil as to government, than it is to govern them in utter ignorance; and on the whole, popular knowledge is a safer thing to deal with than popular ignorance."

In the same strain was the entire evidence, and the result of all was the great educational despatch of July, 1854. This Charter of Indian Education, which in the words of Lord Dalhousie, "contained a scheme of education for all India, far

wider and more comprehensive than the local or the Supreme Government could ever have ventured to suggest. It left nothing to be desired, if, indeed, it did not authorise and direct that more should be done than is within our present grasp."

The despatch of 1854 was confirmed by Lord Stanley's despatch of 1859, after the assumption of the Government of India by the Crown, and the two together form the present "Educational Code," the provisions of which have been thus summarised.<sup>6</sup>

"The main object of the former despatch is to divert the efforts of the Government from the education of the higher classes, upon whom they had up to that date been too exclusively directed, and to turn them to the wider diffusion of education among all classes of the people ; and specially to the provision of primary instruction for the masses. Such instruction is to be provided by the direct instrumentality of Government, and a compulsory rate, levied under the direct authority of Government, is pointed out as the best means of obtaining funds for the purpose. The system must be extended upwards by the establishment of Government schools as models, to be superseded gradually by schools supported on the grant-in-aid principle. This principle is to be of perfect religious neutrality, defined in regular rules adapted to the circumstances of each province, and clearly and publicly placed before the Natives of India. Schools whether purely Government institutions or aided, in all of which (excepting Normal Schools) the payment of some fee, however small, is to be the rule, are to be in regular gradation from those which gave the humblest elementary instruction to the highest colleges ; and the best pupils of

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<sup>6</sup> Great stress is laid on this point : "We have also perceived with satisfaction that the attention of the Council of Education in Calcutta has been lately directed to the subject of attaching to each zillah school the means of teaching practical agriculture ; for there is, as Dr. Mouat most truly observes, no single advantage that could be afforded to the vast rural population of India, that would equal the introduction of an improved system of agriculture".

one grade are to climb through the other grades by means of scholarships obtained in the lower school, and tenable in the higher. To provide masters, Normal Schools are to be established in each province, and moderate allowances given for the support of those who possess an aptness for teaching, and are willing to devote themselves to the profession of school masters. By this means it is hoped that, at no distant period, instructions may be in operation in all the presidencies, calculated to supply masters for all classes of schools, and thus in time greatly to limit, if not altogether to obviate, the necessity of recruiting the educational service by means of engagements made in England.

### XIII—MEDIUM OF EDUCATION—THE VERNACULAR LANGUAGE.

“The medium of education is to be the Vernacular languages of India, into which the best elementary treatises in English should be translated. Such translations are to be advertised for, and liberally rewarded by Government as the means of enriching Vernacular literature. While, therefore, the Vernacular languages are on no account to be neglected, the English language may be taught where there is a demand for it, but the English language is not to be substituted for the Vernacular dialects of the country. The existing institutions for the study of classical languages of India are to be maintained, and respect is to be paid to the hereditary veneration which they may command. Female education is to receive the frank and cordial support of Government, as by it a far greater proportional impulse is imparted to the educational and moral tone of the people, than by the education of men. In addition to the Government and aided colleges and schools for general education, special institutions for imparting special education in law, medicine, engineering, art, and agriculture, are to receive in every province the direct aid and encouragement. The agency by which this system of education is to be carried out is a director in each province, assisted by a competent staff of inspectors, care being taken that the cost of control shall be kept in fair proportion to the cost of direct measures of instruction.

"To complete the system in each presidency a university is to be established, on the model of the London University, at each of the three presidency towns. These universities are not to be themselves places of education given elsewhere ; they are to pass every student of ordinary ability who has fairly profited by the curriculum of school and college study which he has passed through, the standard required being such as to command respect without discouraging the efforts of deserving students. Education is to be aided and supported by the principal officials in every district, and is to receive, besides, the direct encouragement of the State by the opening of Government appointments to those who have received a good education, irrespective of the place or manner in which it may have been acquired ; and, in the lower situations, by preferring a man who can read and write, and as equally eligible in other respects, to one who cannot."

"It is probable that neither Mr. Wingfield nor Mr. Atkinson would propose to carry out their views to the full extent of their literal meaning ; but I think it necessary to declare that Her Majesty's Government have no intention of sanctioning a departure from the principles already deliberately laid down ; and that, while they desire that the means of obtaining an education calculated to fit them for their higher position and responsibilities should be afforded to the upper classes of society in India, they deem it equally incumbent on the Government to take, at the same time, all suitable measures for extending the benefits of education to those classes of the community 'who,' as observed in the Despatch of July, 1854, 'are utterly incapable of obtaining any education worthy of the name by their own unaided efforts.' "

These extracts undoubtedly show that, until the State has placed the means of elementary vernacular education within the reach of those who are unable to procure it for themselves, an annually increasing Government expenditure in any Province upon "the higher classes who are able and willing in many cases to bear a considerable part at least of the cost of their

own education," is not in accordance with the main object of the educational code, nor with the subsequent views of the Home Government.

Another remarkable feature in the despatch of 1854 is, that it makes education a regular part of the business of the State, to be conducted by a Government machinery, on principles intended for equal application to the whole of India.

Thus for good or evil, the East has come in intimate contact with the West. The unchanging East had often in the past "seen mighty legions pass and plunged in thought again". This time, however, the impact is leaving behind a more permanent impress. To me personally, civilization is a mosaic, the richer it is, the more diverse and picturesque are the elements that go to build it up. The world has need of "Karmayogins"—men of great purpose who delight in action, men of strong common sense, men who are constantly knocking at the locked door of Nature's secrets and are harnessing her forces to their own ends, men who in their communal and national life always try to play the game—and these typify western culture at its best. The world have equally the need for "Jnanyogins"—men who love knowledge for its own sake, who renounce their all in contemplating the beauties of the universe, and in establishing direct contact between their own soul and the Universal spirit. The West bereft of the spirit that suffered at the Cross led to the world chaos of 1914 and its aftermath. In the East where the intellectuals withdrew from the world into the inner-self of spiritual life, ignorance and superstition, poverty and squalor have grown up as luxuriant tropical weeds and enveloped the lives of the masses.

In their synthesis lies a new hope for the world ; in their unmeaning clash—a wreckage of much that is of immense value in the scheme of life.

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### CHAPTER III.

#### WASTAGE OF TIME AND ENERGY OF OUR YOUTHS—VERNACULAR AS THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION.

The students, or rather their guardians, are guided by instinct or habit like bees or ants and not by reasoning about the proper course to be pursued. They do not bestow a moment's thought on this important problem and follow the beaten track with tragical consequences.

A degree or diploma with a view to enter Government service or professional career, is the only stimulus before our students, at least to 99 per cent. of them. It is conveniently forgotten that according to the census report for 1931 only 8 in 1000 are supported by Government service and the number is made up of chaprasis, barkandazes (court-peons), petty clerks, constables, sub-inspectors, rural sub-registrars, etc. As for coveted posts, *e.g.*, judgeships, deputy magistrateships or moonsiffships, accountant generalships etc., their number is very limited, and the professions are already overcrowded ten times over. Yet for the sake of these, thousands every year rush to their doom, so to speak. Trade, commerce and industry present no attraction with the result that they have been monopolised by Europeans and non-Bengalis as I have been pointing out (cf. Vol. I. p. 440). The degree-hunting mania has led to most disastrous consequences. Real education is neglected or lost sight of, as the following correspondence in the daily papers show :

"One of the most important causes that have led to the lower standard of efficiency in different subjects on the part of Bengali students appears to me to be the fact that the market is overflooded with notes, sketches, helpbooks etc. Some thirty years ago, they were rare, and when available even brief and to the point. It is a pity that some of the veteran educationists of



Bengal have been writing notes on English texts with Bengali translation of every passage and a Bengali equivalence for the easiest English word—ingloriously voluminous books which are devoured by every student all over the country. But what has been the natural consequence? Boys count solely on their books, seldom pay heed to their professors and teachers. Originality and habit of independent thinking are fast disappearing to the intellectual decay of the whole nation! Not so in other provinces in India. I could respectfully invite the attention of University authorities to the above facts.”—*The A. B. Patrika*, March 28, 1933.

The writer thinks that other provinces are better off in this respect. The following letter will show that the complaint is just the same in Bombay.

#### I—“MORE HARM THAN GOOD.”

“Innumerable annotations and guides such as ‘English in an hour’, ‘English at a glance’, ‘English in two days’, ‘English in a nut-shell’ and such other countless imitations which have sprung up like mushrooms go a great way in misleading the students. It is with a desire to warn them against such guides which are pouring in like an epidemic that these few lines are written.

“It seems that the host of annotations put up in the market aim more at money-making than rendering the right sort of help and guidance to the students. Such imitations not only tax the memory and pockets of the poor students but act as a great impediment in their steady progress.

“These various guides do more harm than good in the study of English, which every well-wisher of the students will not fail to note”.—*The Bombay Chronicle*, March 8, 1933.

#### II—THE CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY AND VERNACULAR MEDIUM.

It is rather interesting and at the same time distressing to note that all the letters lay stress on the failure to learn correct English and not on real education.

The Calcutta University is said to have made an attempt to set matters right by substituting vernaculars in place of English.<sup>1</sup> Let us see how it proceeds.

The report of the Matriculation Regulations Committee<sup>2</sup> appointed by the Senate, which was submitted on May 23, 1932, shows a curious mentality on the part of our University. It is said to *vernacularise* our education as "the Examination in all subjects other than English shall be conducted through the medium of one or other of the major Vernaculars, *viz.*, Bengali, Urdu, Assamese and Hindi." The major vernacular languages shall consist of two papers carrying 100 marks each, while English has been assigned maximum marks, *i.e.*, 300 marks. To quote verbatim: "The Matriculation Examination in English shall be a test (a) of ability to write clear, simple, and correct English and (b) of intelligent comprehension of plain modern English on familiar subjects.

"The course in English shall include select texts in prose and verse to be prescribed by the Syndicate on the recommendation of the Board of Studies in English \* \* \* \* Questions shall be set under the following heads :

- (a) Passages from prescribed texts ;
- (b) Simple unseen passages ;
- (c) Grammar and Composition ;

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<sup>1</sup> The Quinquennial Review on the Progress of Education in Bengal repeats the parrot-cry that *Vernacular would be used for the diffusion of western learning*. "Macaulay's famous Minute of 1835 which led to the introduction of the English medium of instruction and examination looked forward to the time when the vernacular would be used for the diffusion of western learning. After about a century, the province has now declared unmistakably in favour of the vernacular medium in schools "

In reality nothing of the kind has been done. The same 7 to 8 years' time would be wasted in learning "clear, simple and correct English."

<sup>2</sup> The matter is just now (Sept. 1934) under consideration with the Education Minister.

- (d) Translation from one of the recognised Vernaculars into English ;
- (e) One simple essay ;
- (f) English history."

All other subjects carry 100 marks each. It passes my understanding why Indian history questions are to be answered in the vernacular while English history questions must be written in "clear, simple and correct English." This is *vernacularisation with a vengeance*. In volume I (p. 289, *et seq.*), I have discussed at length the huge wastage of time involved in mastering a foreign tongue and writing it with anything approaching correctness ; but as our intelligentsia still labours under the inferiority complex, namely English history must be learnt in correct English and so on, I am obliged to devote space to it. Strange as it may appear, it is the educated people who are most clamorous in insisting on English.

An Englishman, an educationist, who has entered into the spirit of Indian life exclaims with bitterness :

"Similarly, official suggestions for the wider use of the vernacular in schools have been attributed to a desire to restrict the teaching of English, and to revert to the policy of *Divide et impera*."—Mayhew: *The Education of India*, p. 71.

Since Macaulay's time, *i.e.*, in exactly a century, Bengali has made great strides. One of the most influential dailies, with the largest circulation, is quite on a par with any nationalist paper conducted in English ; moreover, it has the merit of containing valuable articles on trade and industry. Those who read it can dispense with English dailies.<sup>3</sup> Then there are the Bengali periodicals—*The Prabasi*, *the Basumati*, *the Bharatbarsa* etc., which often contain valuable articles on modern Japan, China, Afghanistan, Persia, Turkey, not to speak of European countries and America. In fact, average graduates do not know a fraction of the information contained in these Bengali journals. And yet, because they are "graduates," they are often con-

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<sup>3</sup> *The Ananda Bazar Patrika*.

sidered as something sacrosanct.<sup>4</sup> "They are not educated in the proper sense but they are only college passmen."

As instances of the homage we pay to English, the following may be cited. In the Calcutta High Court, proceedings are conducted in English. The last occasion when I sat on the jury box, *i.e.*, before I had completed my sixtieth year, there was a sessions case of which I was chosen foreman. The judge was a Bengali and a former pupil of mine. The accused was a Bengali, the Advocate General, the Standing Counsel were all Bengali barristers besides an Eurasian barrister, who of course knew Bengali. There was the farce of the evidence in each case being translated by the Court interpreter, before it could be "heard" by the Judge and the Jurors. This had the effect of protracting the trial to an unusual length.

Then there is the "Inter-Provincial Conspiracy" case going on before a Special Tribunal, (Oct. 1934) consisting of two Bengali judges and an Englishman, an I. C. S. The latter of

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<sup>4</sup> More important is the effect of the vernacular press and political emissaries to the non-English-knowing world. The efforts of politicians and journalists are undoubtedly giving an edge to the study of vernacular composition, and it is no longer fashionable for Indian politicians to assert, what is too often true, that they can express themselves more easily in English than in their vernacular. The enlarged provincial legislative councils contain many members who are unable to speak in English, and not a few who prefer to speak in the vernacular, in order to secure a wider audience within and without the council chamber. Generally one may say that the number of Indians who need the gift of clear vernacular speech and writing, or who call on others for such gifts, is growing steadily.—Mayhew, *l.c.* p. 198.

A correspondent very well puts it :—

"The undue importance now given to the learning of English, both by parents and by teachers and the difficulty of mastering a foreign tongue have combined to ingrain the idea in the students that education actually means learning of English to which major portion—if not whole of their energy is devoted. Hence a man who has acquired only a smattering of English and can make an exhibition of it in season and out of it passes as an educated man, though he may be totally ignorant of all other subjects of primary importance. If vernacular is allowed to take its proper place and the abnormal craze for English dies a natural death, a sense of true education is sure to dawn upon the majority of students."—*The A. B. Patrika*, Aug. 15, 1934.

course knows Bengali ; in fact, he had to pass an examination in vernacular, before he was confirmed. The accused, 32 in number, are all Bengali-knowing. Some hundreds of witnesses are being examined. The same farce is being enacted. The trial has already gone on for more than 9 months, (Oct. 1934) and there is no knowing when it will be concluded.

Let me quote here the opinions of a few Bengalis who have bestowed thought on the subject. I need not comment on them.

No one who has the least love for his country can wish that instruction should be imparted to the youth of his country in any language other than that, the spirit of which they have drunk with their mother's milk and imbibed with the air that they breathe, and which has been fostered and nourished in the environment in which they live, viz., their mother-tongue. This is only a truism, for take a few examples, no Englishman would dream of the youth of his country being trained through any language other than English, nor, for that matter, a Frenchman otherwise than in French.

We must, however, clearly realise that under circumstances which God alone controls, the position of our country is entirely different from that of either England or France or any other country which manages its own affairs, and this remark applies not only to educational matters but to each and every affair concerning the country. One consequence, however deplorable, of this position, is that we have to spend all our energy from our childhood upward in learning a foreign language viz., English, though this involves neglect of our own mother-tongue. I remember, after having as a little boy passed the Vernacular Examination in Bengali, Arithmetic, History, Geography, Geometry, Mensuration, Hygiene and Physics, I joined an English School which taught up to the Entrance—now called Matriculation—standard, and had to spend five long years, mainly in acquiring a knowledge of English. And with what pains! I remember picking up every new word, new phrase, new idiom and well-turned expression with the same eagerness as a miser piles up his hoard of money. The trouble taken by us in learning English was certainly much more—at least not less—than the labour bestowed by our ancestors in learning the Vedas. And the result of all of this trouble was that Mr. Rowe and others who taught English in our colleges in those days characterised the English written by us as Babu-English. I had the opportunity of talking over this matter with several eminent professors of the Calcutta University and they one and all condemned in one voice the very defective knowledge

of English, displayed by the majority of students who enter college classes not excluding the M.A. If this is the result achieved by our students after years of trouble taken in studying English up to the M.A. class, when the medium of instruction is English, one can easily imagine how they will fare when English is relegated to the position of a second language. All the avenues of employment will surely be closed to our youngmen and their places usurped by men from other provinces. We must fully envisage this contingency before taking any decision in this matter.

To my mind, it appears that in seeking to introduce Bengali up to the Matric Standard, we are beginning at the wrong end. At present all public business is conducted in English. It is used in the High Court and very largely in the Subordinate Courts. It is used in the Legislative Councils, in the Govt. offices throughout the country including the Secretariat, and the public Press and almost everywhere else. So far as I can see there can be no obstacle in the way of introducing the use of Bengali in all these institutions. The use of English is necessitated to meet the convenience of the few Englishmen who are in the service of Government or practise in the law courts; but surely, it is more reasonable and easy that these few Englishmen should acquire a working knowledge of the vernacular of the country in which they live, than that the entire population of the country should be made to learn a foreign language and neglect their own mother-tongue. It appears to be eminently desirable that this concession should be made to the sense of self-respect of the Indian people by securing for their vernaculars that place in their national life which is their due.

I speak from personal experience in the Baroda State, in which the official language used throughout the State including the High Court and the Secretariat is Gujrati and only a small section exists in the Secretariat for carrying on business with the Government of India in English. No inconvenience is felt, and foreigners working in the State have got to learn the official language. Why cannot this be done in British India? Once this is done, the question of the medium of instruction in the schools and colleges will be automatically solved and the Vernacular established as the medium of instruction throughout the country. The English language can then be taught as a second language with advantage, in the schools and colleges, and its position in our country will still be the same as, or perhaps better than, that of English in France or of French in England. It will also be the *lingua franca* of India and being the language of the rulers of the land, and also being possessed of one of the finest literatures in the world, a good knowledge of it will carry with it a prestige which will be a sufficient temptation for our countrymen to bestow more than ordinary care on

its acquisition. We must, however, get rid of the mentality which at present brands an imperfect knowledge of English with the mark of inferiority in social and official life, and our aim should be to acquire only as much ease and fluency in the use of the language as a foreigner may be expected to possess.

In this connection I recollect an incident which happened during the Minto-Morley regime, when in pursuance of the instructions of Lord Morley to establish good feelings between the Europeans and the Indians, a distinguished Indian member of the Bar arranged for a social gathering at his place at which a Japanese gentleman happened to be present. The host welcomed his guests in a speech delivered in pure and graceful English for which he was famous. The Japanese gentleman rose to reply and while acknowledging his inability to emulate his host in his knowledge of English, expressed the hope that it might never be the misfortune of the Japanese people to acquire a foreign language with that amount of trouble which his host must have devoted to its acquisition. The reason why I recall this incident is that our aim should be to acquire only a working knowledge of English and utilise the time and energy that will thus be saved in other directions, besides improving our knowledge of the Vernacular. I consider that there should be a country-wide agitation to secure for the Vernaculars their rightful place in our national life. But so long as this consummation is not achieved, no steps should be taken that would further weaken the position of the English language in the scheme of national education and I would ask the members of the conference which is going to meet for deliberating over this matter to ponder carefully over the wisdom of dethroning English and thereby injuring our prospects in life, which are by no means bright now, until we can successfully apply the remedy suggested above for radically curing the evil.—M. K. Ghatak, *The A. B. Patrika*, July 3, 1934.

### III—MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF INTELLIGENCE.

Mr. Upendra Nath Roy, Head Master, Kalihati R. S. H. E. School and Mr. Prannath Sarkar meet very ably certain objections raised by Mr. Ghatak.

Mr. Ghatak is afraid that if vernacular be made the medium of instruction, English will suffer in our secondary schools.

But should we forget that Education is for the intellectual development of the child? This intellectual development may be achieved through the teaching of certain subjects which have been included in the curriculum. The secondary school curriculum is meant for the

intellectual development of children of ages varying from about eight to about sixteen. Each of the subjects of this curriculum, English, Bengali, Science, Mathematics, History, Civics, Geography, Classics, Hygiene or Drawing, should be taught for itself and not for the proficiency in one subject alone, if the object of including these in the curriculum is to be achieved.

Now, if you have an English textbook for a subject other than English and teach the subject through the medium of English, the subject becomes unintelligible to a large percentage of the boys of the class which consists generally of a few bright boys, a large number of boys of very ordinary intelligence and some below-average boys too. The teacher's business turns into translating what is written in English, rather than in rousing the interest of his pupils in the subject, in making the subject a vivid one. The subject is not really taught; the good boys commit the pages to memory and secure good marks in the examinations and the backward boys are gradually eliminated. But neither the good nor the backward boys learn much with the result that many boys go up to the M.A. classes without knowing when India passed into the hands of the British Crown from the management of the East India Company or in which continent Constantinople stands.

Do we not thus sacrifice our boys to the learning of English? But, is even English properly learnt in this way? Certainly not.

Teachers of History, Geography, Mathematics, Science, Classics and other non-English subjects may not all be particularly well-equipped for the teaching of English, and yet if they all be compelled to teach through the medium of English it is not unlikely that the knowledge of English, (of its pronunciation, grammar, idiom etc.) will be greatly neutralised in non-English classes.—*The A. B. Patrika*, July 10, 1934.

When students are not intently thinking to understand the meaning of a difficult passage in the light of the teacher's instruction, it is the matter and not the form of the instruction that engages their attention. If the instruction is in English, they hardly profit by it either in its linguistic aspect which is thrown into the background; or in its literary aspect inasmuch as the ideas are not brought home to their minds by reason of their "defective knowledge" of English. Substitution of Vernacular for English will be a step in the right direction which is likely to further the prospects of our young men instead of "jeopardizing" them. As regards the teaching of "Colloquial English", there are books on "Spoken English" written by experts. The teacher's instruction will give them only a bookish knowledge (relating to text books), if any at all.

The objection that the proposed change will put undue prominence on the Vernacular cannot stand examination. A sound knowledge of



the Vernacular serves as a good foundation for the mastery of English through assimilation and differentiation. Further, diffusion of the knowledge of English literature (with its quickening influence) throughout the masses is not possible except through the Vernacular literature enriched with translations. The rapid progress of Japan has been attributed to her assimilation of western thought, by no less an authority than Dr. West, the author of "Bilingualism".

The usual logical processes (classification, generalisation, analogy and the like) for economising and minimising memory-work being inapplicable to the numerous irregularities of the English language in all its styles, a foreign learner of English has to labour under serious disadvantages. To make all students aim at getting "literary" education would involve enormous wastage. The common run of students had better remain contented with only a working knowledge of English."—*The A. B. Patrika*, Aug. 16, 1934.

Dr. Anath Nath Chatterji in his able Report on the causes of the poverty of the students' health enumerates among others "the strain on the students due to a *foreign medium of education*."

#### IV—CLASSICAL EDUCATION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTELLIGENCE.

The French writer whom I have quoted elsewhere has some valuable remarks to make, which are far more applicable to us.

"One might consent, perhaps, at a pinch, to continue to accept all the disadvantages of our classical education, although it produced nothing but discontented men, and men unfitted for their station in life, did the superficial acquisition of so much knowledge, the faultless repeating by heart of so many textbooks, raise the level of intelligence. But does it really raise this level? Alas, no! The conditions of success in life are the possession of judgment, experience, initiative, and character—qualities which are not bestowed by books. Books are dictionaries, which it is useful to consult, but of which it is perfectly useless to have lengthy portions in one's head.

"How is it possible for professional instruction to develop the intelligence in a measure quite beyond the reach of classical instruction? This has been well shown by M. Taine.

'Ideas', he says, 'are only formed in their natural and normal surroundings ; the promotion of the growth is effected by the innumerable impressions appealing to the senses which a young man receives daily in the workshop, the mine, the law court, the study, the builder's yard, the hospital ; at the sight of tools, materials, and operations ; in the presence of customers, workers, and labour, of work well or ill done, costly or lucrative. In such a way are obtained those trifling perceptions of detail of the eyes, the ear, the hands, and even the sense of smell which, picked up involuntarily, and silently elaborated, take shape within the learner, and suggest to him sooner or later this or that new combination, simplification, economy, improvement or invention. The young Frenchman is deprived, and precisely at the age when they are most fruitful, of all these precious contacts, of all these indispensable elements of assimilation. For seven or eight years on end he is shut up in a school and is cut off from that direct personal experience which would give him a keen and exact notion of men and things and of the various ways of handling them.

' . . . At least nine out of ten have wasted their time and pains during several years of their life—telling, important, even decisive years. Among such are to be counted, first of all, the half or two-thirds of those who present themselves for examination—I refer to those who are rejected ; and then among those who are successful, who obtain a degree, a certificate, a diploma, there is still a half or two-thirds—I refer to the over-worked. Too much has been demanded of them by exacting that on a given day, on a chair or before a board, they should, for two hours in succession, and with respect to a group of sciences, be living repertoires of all human knowledge. In point of fact they were that or nearly so, for two hours on that particular day, but a month later they are so no longer. They could not go through the examination again. Their too numerous and too burdensome acquisitions slip incessantly from their mind, and are not replaced. Their mental vigour has declined, their fertile capacity for growth has dried up, the fully-developed man appears, and he is often a used-up man.'

"The illustrious psychologist subsequently shows us the difference between our system and that of the Anglo-Saxons. The latter do not possess our innumerable special schools. With them instruction is not based on book-learning, but on object lessons. The engineer, for example, is trained in a workshop, and never at a school, a method which allows of each individual reaching the level his intelligence permits of. He becomes a workman or a foreman if he can get no further, an engineer if his aptitudes take him as far. This manner of proceeding is much more democratic and of much greater benefit to society than that of making the whole career of an individual depend on an examination, lasting a few hours, and undergone at the age of nineteen or twenty.

"In France, where the contrary system prevails—in France, which with each succeeding generation is falling more and more into line with China—the sum total of the wasted forces is enormous."—G. Le Bon: *The Crowd*.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### NEGLECT OF PRIMARY EDUCATION AND ITS EFFECT ON THE MASSES.

The time is long past when anybody could seriously contend that the bulk of human beings were made for physical labour only and that even the faint glimmer of rudimentary knowledge was not for them. On the contrary, it is at present universally recognized that a certain minimum of general instruction is an obligation which society owes to all its future members, and in nearly the whole civilized world every State is trying to meet this obligation only in one way, namely, by making elementary education compulsory and free. And thus it is, that, led by the German States, country after country in Europe and America and Japan in the East have adopted this system of free and compulsory education.—G. K. Gokhale: *Speech on Free and Compulsory Education*—Imperial Legislative Council, 1910.

It has been shown all along, how the vast resources of this fair province are frittered away by our rulers. Unless you raise the average intelligence of the masses by means of primary education, no Royal Agricultural Commission with its appendage, the Imperial Agricultural Research Council costing huge sums to the tax-payer will avail. The essential and most fundamental thing is that they should be taught to be frugal in their habits and to lay by something against the lean years. They are sunk in gross superstition, and age-long conservative ideas govern their daily routine of life. The one thing needful, our Government fights shy of; for it knows full well what the awakening of the proletariat means. Hence the criminal neglect of compulsory primary education.

Emerson, writing some three scores of years or more ago in praise of New England "because it is the country in the world where is the freest expenditure for education", observes: "The poor man, whom the law does not allow to take an ear of corn when starving, nor a pair of shoes for his freezing feet, is allowed to put his hand into the pocket of the rich, and say, you shall educate me, not as you will, but as I will: not alone in the elements, but, by further provision, in the

languages, in sciences, in the useful and in elegant arts. The child shall be taken up by the State, and taught, at the public cost—the rudiments of knowledge, and, at last, the ripest results of art and science."

Every modern State now recognises the promotion of primary education as its first duty. Not to speak of Japan and China, even Angora, "with its terrible poverty", as also Soviet Russia is striving hard to make up for lost time. Bengal has been blessed with 175 years of enlightened British rule, with the result that barely 7—8 per cent. of the population is literate.

A quarter of a century has elapsed since Gokhale began his campaign for elementary education and his Bill was thrown out by Lord Hardinge's Government, and we are practically no better now, for the Census Report, taken in February 1931, says: The total literate population of India in 1921 was 22,623,651; and is now 28,131,315. On the whole it has risen from 7 to 8 per cent.

But Japan, in the course of half a century, has achieved marvellous progress in her fight against illiteracy. The following graphic accounts of the progress of literacy in Soviet Russia, Japan and China read almost like a romance and stand in glaring contrast with the state of things in India.

#### I—LITERACY IN SOVIET RUSSIA.

How Soviet Russia by systematically educating its adult citizens on a scale never before attempted by any country hopes to abolish illiteracy by 1933 or 1934 is told by Dr. Albert P. Pinkevitch, President of the Second State University in Moscow and one of the leaders who formulated educational policies of the new Soviet Government following the revolutions. Dr. Pinkevitch, who was studying American schools under the auspices of the International Institute of Teachers' College, Columbia University, believes that the hope of the present government lies in the education of adults. The methods are comparable only to the adult education movement in America (he said) adding that the two channels for learning in Russia are in professional and political culture education. He describes

"cottage reading houses" in the small villages where illiterate peasants are learning to read, write and to take a part in their government.

Discussing the important phase of Russia's educational programme known as political enlightenment, Dr. Pinkevitch said, the term was peculiarly Soviet. "It is not found in the international pedagogical literature nor is it found in our own literature during the first year of the revolution. Our country is backward in the sphere of general enlightenment, and the placing of great emphasis on adult education in a country such as ours therefore is entirely natural".

"Unless the masses are enlightened a heightening of their economic welfare is impossible, co-operation is impossible and a genuine political life is impossible. All these facts make it clear that the communists, in undertaking the work of popular enlightenment, are not moved by philanthropic sentiments, but rather by the settled conviction that knowledge is one of the most powerful of weapons and, if the masses are to be victorious they must possess it in abundance. Among the first facts faced by the revolutionary government was the alarming illiteracy of the people. One of our primary tasks is consequently the abolition of illiteracy. By 1933-34 the ability to read and write should be the possession of every citizen of the Soviet Union. Such, at least, is the goal set by the educators in Russia to-day".—*The Amrita Bazar Patrika*, June 19, 1929.

An American writer, by no means partial to the Soviet regime, has been constrained to observe: "Its cafés cater to people who do not mind dirty cutlery and soup stains on the walls. Its hotels are little better than barns. Its book-stores—and there you find the Great Exception—its book-stores are excellent. Better than they have been, for the proletariat is more hungry for knowledge than it is for cakes, or even bread. —Nagley Farson: *Seeing Red To-day in Russia*, 1930, p. 162.

Lord Pentland who has recently travelled in Soviet Russia and who is by no means enamoured of its ways and methods has, nevertheless, the fairness to pay the following tribute to the "achievements of the Communist Regime".

"And in spite of the terrible persecution of priests I believe it is on the cultural side that Leninism is having the greatest and most beneficial influence. The thousands of new schools and teachers, the millions of books which have been printed, the new kinemas and places of amusement cannot fail to have some permanent effect on the country. One must remember, too, the splendid work which has been done both for the cure and prevention of disease and in alleviation of the physical distress, particularly among children, which followed the civil war."—*Manchester Guardian*, Nov., 1930.

## II—OBLIGATORY ELEMENTARY EDUCATION IN ITALY.

"Children are prepared to confront life and not just to be able to win certificates for answering questions which test the memory and not the reason or sentiment. They are also, from their earliest days, taught to appreciate the ethical and cultural things of life.

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Obligatory elementary education has been extended to the age of fourteen. . . . . The boys are taught to respect the dignity of manual work. To be a skilled artisan—a man who can solve problems or invent or make things—is looked on in the elementary popular schools as a greater thing than to yearn for a 'white collar' job".—J. S. Munro: *Through Fascism to World Power*, p. 389.

## III—PRIMARY EDUCATION IN JAPAN.

The Emperor of Japan's rescript for encouraging education runs as under:

"Hereafter education should be so diffused that there shall be no ignorant family in the land and no family with an ignorant member."

"In modern times, the progress of a country's civilization is gauged by the literacy of its peoples. The percentage of literacy in Japan is 99.23 of the total population, there being a slight

difference between the percentage of men which is 99.32 and that of women which is 99.15. According to the above-mentioned test, Japan is in the very forefront of civilized nations.

"The amount spent on primary education in Japan is £225,00,000 while the total expenditure on education is £550,00,000 equivalent to about 40 per cent. of the national revenue. As a result of getting seven years' compulsory education, the average intelligence of the boys and girls has evidently increased, and their interest in life widened; they look more cheerful than boys and girls of the same age do in India. \* \* \* The girls employed in cotton mills or in hotels are the products of these primary schools and they do credit to the education that they have received."—Sir Lalubhai Samaldas: *Impressions of Japan*, 1933.

#### IV—THE POWER OF THE PRESS IN JAPAN.

In but one Oriental country to-day is the daily press a true mirror of the people's mind; a leader in the development of the national character. This is Japan, land of cherry blossoms indeed, but symbolized no less by the kimono-clad lady interviewer and the hieroglyphic headline. Nowhere else in the Eastern hemisphere are the peasants commonly literate and the coolie labourers able to purchase the latest edition of the news. Nowhere else is the vernacular press so widely disseminated, or a social force exerting so powerful an influence over a reading public of millions.<sup>1</sup>

Only in the Island Empire do the people take with a natural zest to that essentially modern creation, journalism. But there, besides the *matutinal* bowl of rice, is nowadays propped a glaring sheet of cabalistic characters that proclaim the words of London, Paris, Peking and Washington. Before the gates of feudal palaces run the little newspaper girls with their tinkling bells and their quavering equivalent of "Extra!

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<sup>1</sup> The two leading newspapers of Japan, namely, the Tokio *Asahi* and the Osaka *Manichi* have a combined daily circulation of 2,500,000. —Upton Close.



Extra!" The ceremonious slow-moving life of ancient times is punctuated by the boom of the flash light, and the silk-clad statesman fears, more than the swords of the Samurai, the interrogations of the reporter.

#### V—WHERE COOLIES CAN READ.

"All classes of people, in rural as well as urban districts, are touched by the typical news-stands, brilliant with magazines whose covers portray the national taste in maidenly loveliness, with sunday pictorials, 'Illustrated News' and comic cartoon sheets.

"One sees rickshaw coolies squatting by the curb, looking like a colony of mushrooms under their straw hats, absorbing the most recent society scandal or the political news from abroad while they wait for passengers. A business man, imposing in silk robe and Derby hat, flutters by with a copy of a gazette tucked in his kimono sleeve. A small stenographer in wooden shoes clatters into the grub store at the noon-hour and unfolds the Woman's page while she sips in 'isu-curemu' soda through a straw.

"Incongruous though it is, this entire pageant of Japanese life, it is from just such conditions, with all the manifold problems they present, that the newspaper rises with its message. In a land so filled with striking contrasts, so ceaselessly changing, when the air is charged with unrest and everyone asks of his neighbour, 'Where are we going?', the one institution with the ability to give expression to these undertones is the daily press.

"There are more than 1,000 newspapers in various parts of Japan, exclusive of periodicals, which number 3,000 more and of these ten attain five-figure circulation. Their total daily issue has been estimated at more than 5,000,000 copies. But their mere number and volume are not the most significant feature of such enterprises; it is the leadership they exert in the progressive thought of the nation."—Miriam Beard.

## VI—THE POWER OF THE PRESS IN CHINA.

There were practically no newspapers in China at the time of the establishment of the Republic. To-day there are hundreds and while most of them are small, there are some with circulations running above hundred thousand. The two leading newspapers in Shanghai *The Skun-Pac* and *The Sinwantoo* have difficulty in obtaining newsprinting equipment fast enough to keep up with their growing circulation. The Commercial Press, the largest printing establishment in Shanghai which publishes magazines and school books, is a monument to the growth of modern education in China.

## VII—DENMARK AND MASS EDUCATION.

What the raising of the average intelligence of a people by means of mass education means is well illustrated by the case of Denmark.

Denmark is a kingdom of 16,568 sq. miles and a population of 3,435,000. Elementary education has been widely diffused in this tiny land since the beginning of the last century, and in 1814 it was made compulsory. The school age is from 7 to 14. The instruction in the public schools is mostly *gratuitous*. Out of her total revenue of Kr. 3,21,738,000 (=Rs. 23,40,00,000) she spends Kr. 62,467,000 or nearly one-fifth on public instruction.<sup>2</sup> Of her productive area 6 per cent. is forest and of the remainder less than one-half is arable, and the remainder pasture and meadows. In 1925 the United Kingdom alone imported from Denmark butter worth £17,110,534, eggs worth £5,491,744

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<sup>2</sup> Even for higher education, the State does very little in Bengal. By far the larger proportion of burden is borne by the people.

Out of a total expenditure of Rs. 4,22,87,036 on all forms of education for boys as well as girls, the Provincial exchequer contributed only Rs. 1,44,46,851 in the year 1931-32 according to the figures given in the Quinquennial Review of the Progress of Education in Bengal. Of the 51 colleges in Bengal, only 12 are managed by the Government and 21 are aided, the Government meeting 33 per cent. of the total expenditure. These figures are exclusive of the University of Calcutta. The Government of Bengal contribute about 14 per cent. only of the total income of the Calcutta University, whereas the 19 Universities in England and Wales receive Parliamentary grants to the extent of 34·8 per cent.

and bacon worth £22,160,384. The prices of these three items amount to nearly 63 crores of rupees. In short, the main source of wealth of Denmark lies in her dairy produce.

#### VIII—MODERN ITALY AND AGRICULTURAL IMPROVEMENTS.

The reclamation of the marshy lands and the intensive increase of grain production up to national self-sufficiency have been rendered possible in Italy because of the intelligence and education of her people.

"In September 1929 a *Bonifica Integrale* (Integral Land Reclamation) Under-Secretary portfolio was created in the Ministry of Agriculture with *liaisons* with the Ministries of Public Works and, later, of Corporations. The work now in hand ranges over an area which totals over seven-and-a-half million acres. To public funds are added private consortiums with State guarantees. The most conspicuous success is that of the Pontine Marshes whose reclamation has baffled engineers from the times of Imperial Rome. The first victory in the war against nature in this zone was signalled by the institution of the town of Littoria, which is a reasonably flourishing township of ex-servicemen and their families drawn from all parts of Italy. Laid out as a Roman *quadrata*, it proudly stands as a new town, the centre and capital of a new Commune, amid a network of roads and irrigation canals, overlooking cultivated fields in a region which less than seven years ago was a pestiferous, malarial swamp, haunted by fever-stricken wraiths of neglected humanity.

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"Accompanying the *Bonifica Integrale* is, as I have said, the work of raising enough grain for Italy's internal needs. This 'Battle of the Grain' had its zero hour in June 1925. Italy's requirements amount to about 75 million quintals of grain. Of this total Italy produced 44 million in 1922 importing the balance. In 1925, when the 'Battle' started, it imported 65½ million. The 1932 crop marked a victorious conclusion with 75,151,600 quintals. This general increase of production has

been accompanied by a general all-round agricultural increase. In May 1933 it was announced that the 'Battle of the Grain' was to be transformed into 'The Integral Battle of Agriculture.' Fascist Italy has accordingly moved to the assault of the second line of trenches in its great war for the ruralisation of Italy."—  
I. S. Munro : *Through Fascism to World Power*, pp. 362-63.

#### IX—BENGAL GOVERNMENT AND PRIMARY EDUCATION.

The Bengal Government recently (Aug. 1934) takes credit for what it has done to encourage primary education. The following Press Note has been issued :—

"Bengal spends about Rs. 67 lakhs on primary education for boys and a little more than Rs. 15 lakhs on primary education for girls. There are over 44,600 primary schools for boys and 18,000 primary schools for girls. In these primary schools 17,25,000 boys and 5,60,000 girls receive their education. Thus nearly 24 lakhs of children are now receiving primary education in 62,600 schools at a cost of nearly Rs. 82 lakhs per year. Of the total expenditure of Rs. 82 lakhs, *Government contribute nearly Rs. 27 lakhs*, the District Boards, Municipalities and other Local Bodies about 20·5 lakhs, and the parents, guardians and the local people in fees, subscriptions, donations and endowments about Rs. 34·5 lakhs." (*Italics are mine*).

Here is a "civilized" Government which raises 30—32 crores of rupees as revenue but can afford to contribute only 27 lakhs or 0·9% approximately for primary education. Japan, on the other hand, spends about 20% of her gross revenue on primary education.

The communique is self-contradictory for it admits that this *literacy* is only in name "because it admits that the wastage is much greater. The variation in number from class to class is so great that only 4 or 5 boys out of 100 at present reach class V."

The Hartog Committee made the following pertinent observations : "The vast increase in numbers in primary schools

produces no commensurate increase in literacy, for only a small portion of those who are at the primary stage reach class IV in which the attainment of literacy may be expected." "In Bengal more than 80 per cent. of boys entering elementary schools bid good-bye to their studies after a year or two and relapse into illiteracy."

A quarter of a century ago (1908) Sir D. P. Sarvadhikary observed from his place in the Bengal Council :

"An outstanding feature of the educational figures is the preponderance of the directing and inspecting charges, though that which is to be directed and inspected has not proportionately expanded.

"Inspection may be, and no doubt is, highly necessary for sound education ; but inspection-ridden education that is primarily starved can never prosper, and it is a moot question whether more money ought not to be spent on the articles to be inspected than on the inspecting machinery.

"Inspection on inspection and inspection of inspection is apt to end in shrimps and water-weed floating in the improved milk-supply, as happened in the case of the fabled Royal consumer of old."

Since then the evil has been multiplied. I can relate from personal experience the amount of money wasted in these so-called inspection. Sometimes the Inspectress of Female Education goes to a distant village, say, in the district of Khulna. She is accompanied by a posse of the junior inspecting staff. When it is borne in mind that the object of inspection is only a primary girls' school getting a poor monthly grant, the sum thus spent on inspection, including travelling allowance, halage, etc., is out of all proportion to the grant.

It has been pointed out in the proper place that the Imperial Government robs Bengal of two thirds of her revenue, which never returns to Bengal ; hence education, primary,

secondary and high, is mainly paid for by the people themselves. Let us take some of the major provinces :

Province	Population	State expenditure in rupees.
Madras ... ..	4,67,80,107	2,55,71,715
Bombay ... ..	2,18,54,866	1,90,01,654
Bengal ... ..	5,01,14,002	1,44,50,039
United Provinces ...	4,84,08,763	2,17,97,033

It is thus evident at a glance that Bengal which has the largest population and contributes the largest amount to the Imperial Exchequer gets the least amount from the Government. Nor is this all. The figures are from the Report for 1931-32 ; in the budget for 1932-33, the grant has been reduced to 1,35,21,433, *i.e.*, by 9 lakhs !

#### X—ILLITERACY AND ITS EFFECT ON THE AGRICULTURISTS.

It is as though, in order to save a vessel from shipwreck in difficult waters, great and exhaustive care were taken to write down all the true sailing directions and then to give the book containing those directions into the hands of seamen who could not read.—Norman Angel : *From Chaos to Control* (1932).

There is a saying in Bengali : "Uproot the tree and water it at the top". This exactly represents the policy of our paternal Government towards agriculture, the chief source of our income. The Linlithgow (Agriculture) Commission cost the ryots 13 lakhs of rupees. It lays emphasis on the importance of primary education thus :

"We are much attracted by the possibilities which a development of adult education on a large scale hold out. Such a development would antedate by at least a generation that great advance in literacy which, in our view, is essential to progress in all directions. Its influence in enlarging the scope of the cultivator's horizon and in increasing his willingness to adopt agricultural improvements and his capacity to watch over his own interests in buying and selling commodities and produce would be immense. Valuable time would thus be gained at a somewhat critical period, since conditions may not remain as favourable as they have been, and still are, for the introduction of the agricultural products of India to the world's markets with the beneficial reactions on internal prosperity which may be expected to follow. Even more important is

the stimulus which would be given to the spread of primary education amongst the youth of both sexes."

But a costly department has been created, which I am afraid, brings home very little tangible good to the agriculturist. Let me quote several authorities competent to speak on the subject.

Government officials who have bestowed any thought on the subject are unanimous in urging the prime necessity of mass education.

"The solution is summed up in one word 'Education.' Unless the masses are educated it is difficult to expect any improvement in the sanitary and economic conditions in the rural areas."—*Momen: Report of the Agricultural Commission*, IV, p. 327.

"First and foremost of all we need universal primary education". —Peddie, *ibid.*, p. 426.

"Then, again, consider the appalling illiteracy of the people. Eleven years ago, I remarked that paradoxical as it might sound, the two greatest obstacles in the way of the co-operative movement were both literacy and illiteracy. A body of illiterate men, however much they may learn co-operative principles by rote, are not in a position in actual practice to translate those principles into action. They are necessarily dependent on their literate neighbours for help and guidance. The nature of education which is meted out to the sons of cultivators in village schools instead of developing character stunts their moral sense, encourages a tendency to live more on their wits than by manual labour, and converts men, who would have been otherwise honest, into pettifogging tonts. Their literacy brings them more into touch with the Law Courts, Zamindars' Kutcheries, and Jute Offices, and not from the devotees who frequent these sanctuaries can the lessons of honesty and honest dealings be learned. Till a really sound system of primary education can be devised, which will teach men to love their land and home, which will, instead of making them hate manual labour, impress upon them its dignity, which will develop character, instead of undermining it, it is well to remember that literacy instead of being a help, can be—is, in fact,—an obstacle to the movement."—*Aims and Ideals of Agricultural Co-operation in Bengal* by J. M. Mitra, Registrar of Co-operative Societies, Bengal.

Government always begin at the wrong end. I should be the last person to disparage the necessity for scientific research. The simple fact is, however, overlooked that our agricultural population, steeped in ignorance and illiteracy and owning only small plots and scattered holdings, are not in a position to take advantage of or utilise the elaborate scientific researches which

lie entombed in the bulletins and transactions of these Institutes. Mr. Mackenna very rightly observes: "*The Famine Commissioners, so long ago as 1880, expressed the view that no general advance in the agricultural system can be expected until the rural population had been so educated as to enable them to take a practical interest in agricultural progress and reform. These views were confirmed by the Agricultural Conference of 1888 . . . . The most important and probably the soundest proposition laid down by the conference was that it was most desirable to extend primary education amongst agricultural classes*". Such small countries as Denmark, Holland and Belgium are in a position to send immense supplies of cheese, butter, eggs, bacon, etc., to England, because the farmers there are highly advanced in general enlightenment and technical education and are thus in a position to profit by the researches of experts. The peasant proprietors of France are equally fortunate in this respect; over and above the abundant harvest of cereals they grow vine and oranges and have been highly successful in sericulture; while the silk industry in its very cradle, so to speak, namely, Murshidabad and Malda, is languishing and is in a moribund condition.

Various forms of cattle-plague, *c.g.*, rinder-pest, foot-and-mouth disease, make havoc of our cattle every year and the ignorant masses, steeped in superstitions look helplessly on and ascribe the visitations to the wrath of the goddess *Sitala*. It is useless to din Pasteur's researches into their ear. As I have said above, our Government have the happy knack of beginning at the wrong end. An ignorant people and a costly machinery of scientific experts go ill together.

Recently on the occasion of Salem Bank Jubilee Celebration the supreme necessity of the removal of illiteracy among the masses was urged by the Director of Agriculture, Mr. S. V. Ramamurthi, I.C.S.

"He said in the course of his speech that he had just returned after a holiday in Europe. He visited Italy in his tour. Italy was just like India in many respects. In wealth and human energy also the Italians were like Indians. Their land tenure was the same, *i.e.*, the *varam* system. They too had small holdings. For several years they too had



been occupying a low position among the nations of the world. But, for some years now, they had been rising.

Three things were needed to improve agriculture. Firstly, scientists must find out improved methods, secondly, these methods must be taught to the villagers and thirdly, the villagers must carry out these methods. Madras was second to no other place in regard to the first condition. There was hardly any province in India where work was done better than was being done in the Agricultural College at Coimbatore. In Italy, five years' intense propaganda had led to the increased yield of wheat by more than one-third the former production. They used the same methods and they had the same propagandist officers. But in India, they did not adopt anything intensively as the people of Italy did. Italians believed that unless a thing was done fully there was nothing effective. In regard to the second condition, the reason for the Italians being more successful was due to spiritual influence, which served as a background for their economic development. The problem was how to make the ryots here do what was largely needed for his own welfare, and that of the nation at large. The cultivator in Italy felt he was a vital part of the nation. The agriculturists there were regarded as civil servants. In Italy, Mussolini woke the people up. In India the season must come for them to wake up. The removal of illiteracy was the only way to improve their economic conditions. Except China they were the only nation in the world to-day having a 90 per cent. illiteracy in their population. The need was urgent and vital.

Sir T. Vijayaraghavachariar (Vice-Chairman of the Agricultural Research Council) stated that the secret behind Italy's progress was that there was Sgr. Mussolini to see his orders carried out. Things were easy there. In India it was different. A complexity of routine and a multiplicity in the departments of Government had reduced efficient working. Their officers received high salaries which swallowed the entire national resources. Japan, like other western nations, had also improved greatly in recent years. Government did not allot liberally for the nation-building departments in India.

The President (C. Rajagopalachariar) in the course of his concluding remarks said that Indians had no power to regulate their affairs in order to effect improvements in regard to the expansion of primary education, or the improvement of the methods of cultivation or even to improve the national economy. Swaraj or the grant of freedom was the only panacea which was capable of curing our several ills. All money was spent now on the military and high salaries. Even under the coming reforms nearly two-thirds of the national income would be set apart as non-votable items. The nation-building departments were being starved."

—*The Hindu*, July 17, 1934.

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## CHAPTER V.

### EDUCATIONAL BACKWARDNESS OF THE MOSLEMS OF BENGAL.

"I assure you that the (Hindu) Bengalees are the only people in our country whom we can properly be proud of and it is only due to them that knowledge, liberty and patriotism have progressed in our country. I can truly say that really they are the head and the crown of all the different communities of Hindustan."—SIR SYED AHMAD.

The backwardness of the Moslems in matters educational has been an object of solicitude to the Government from the very inception of British rule as we have seen before. Realising that the Hindus can take care of themselves, Warren Hastings founded the Calcutta Madrassa in 1780. But even as late as 1850, the failure of the Moslem community to profit by the opportunities presented to it attracted the attention of the Department of Education (see p. 48). The late Justice Syed Mahmood, son of Sir Syed Ahmad, very impartially discusses the causes which have operated to thwart the progress of his own co-religionists.

#### I—MOSLEMS OPPOSE ENGLISH EDUCATION.

"This state of things was, however, limited to the Hindus. Far different were the feelings of the Mahomedans, whose attitude towards English education was anything but friendly. Contemporaneous evidence of this circumstance is furnished by the evidence of the celebrated Sanskrit scholar, Mr. H. H. Wilson, who at that period, and since 1823, had been a member and Secretary of the Committee of Public Instruction at Calcutta, and was otherwise deeply interested and concerned in the spread of education in India. He was examined upon the subject of the measures taken by Government in 1835, as a witness before a Select Committee of the House of Commons, on the 18th July, 1853. The question put to him was: 'From your intimate acquaintance with literary men, when you were

in India, what is your impression of the opinion that they formed of that neglect of the languages of India, which you say has been manifested?" His answer was, "Upon the determination to abolish the stipends, and the proposal to appropriate all the funds to English education, there was a petition from the Mahomedans of Calcutta, signed by about 8,000 people, including all the most respectable Maulavis and native gentlemen of that city. After objecting to it upon general principles, they said that the evident object of the Government was the conversion of the Natives ; that they encouraged English exclusively, and discouraged Mahomedan literature."—Syed Mahmood: *A History of English Education in India*. (1781-93), pp. 53-54.

When barely in my teens I often found the late Nawab Abdul Latiff at public meetings. He had more friends amongst the Hindus than amongst his own co-religionists. In Hindu joint-stock family disputes on the partition of ancestral property, the Nawab was often in demand to act as an arbitrator. In him no trace of communalism could be discerned. He even anticipated the late Sir Syed Ahmad in the recognition of the stern fact that if the Moslems were not to lag behind in the race with the Hindus, the former must shake off their age-long tradition of nourishing the past and assuming an air of petulance. In his evidence before the Education Commission appointed by Lord Ripon, the Nawab "regrets that this condition—the decadence of the Muhammadan community—is unwisely attributed solely to the action of the British Government and not to acts of omission and commission on the part of Muhammadans themselves, and to a great extent to causes beyond the control of both the Government and the Muhammadans. \* \* \* The numerical inferiority of the Muhammadans in Government employ was not a trustworthy test ; for the memorialists had overlooked the consideration that as regards Bengal where the Muhammadans are most numerous, the mass of the population consists of cultivators among some millions of Brahmins and Kayasthas who from time immemorial have enjoyed a superior system of education and in consequence a passport to public offices."

"Special encouragement to any class is an evil, and it will be a sore reproach to Musalmans if the pride they have shown in other matters does not stir them up to a course of honourable activity ; to a determination that whatever their backwardness in the past, they will not suffer themselves to be outstripped in the future ; to a conviction that self-help and self-sacrifice are at once nobler principles of conduct and surer paths to worldly success than sectarian reserve or the hope of exceptional indulgence."—*Report of the Education Commission of 1882-83.*

Sir John Strachey in his *India* has made the following pertinent remarks on the subject :

"The success of the measures for the promotion of higher education has been more marked among the Hindus than among the Mohammedans. In many parts of India, Mohammedans, especially those of the upper classes, have always been disinclined to accept the education offered in our schools and colleges, and frequent complaint has been made that they are consequently unable to compete upon equal terms with Hindus for employment under Government. Feelings of religious intolerance sometimes tend to make the Mohammedans refuse to admit the necessity of western knowledge, but there are other reasons which affect them."

The Government of Bengal have pursued systematically an extremely retrograde policy for the educational uplift of the Moslems. Whatever funds are available have been spent for Muktabs<sup>1</sup> and Madrassas, where the training imparted is calculated to keep out modern ideas from the mind of Moslem boys and perpetuate and even widen the cleavage between the two communities.

"If it had been intended to keep the British nation in ignorance of real knowledge the Baconian philosophy would not have been allowed to displace the system of the schoolmen, which was the best calculated to perpetuate ignorance. In the same manner the Sangscrit system would be the best calculated

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<sup>1</sup> Muktabs are primary schools on an Islamic basis intended for Moslem scholars.

to keep this country in darkness, if such had been the policy of the British Legislature"—thus exclaimed the great Hindu Reformer in 1823 ; to-day we find, however, that the British rulers have entered into an unhallowed alliance with the reactionaries to perpetuate mediævalism among the rising Moslem boys and youths. Thus the Government of Bengal spends over sixteen lakhs of rupees every year specially for Muslim education, in addition to other means adopted by it for the promotion of Muhammadan education.<sup>2</sup>

## II—EDUCATED MOSLEMS AND MADRASSAS.

Educated Moslems themselves, however, are dead against Madrassas. Some seven years ago a conference of educated and cultured Moslems was held at Dacca, at which the main subject of discussion was the language and literature of the Bengali Moslems and the causes which have contributed towards their backwardness. The proceedings were conducted in chaste Bengali and I subjoin below a few extracts therefrom (rendered into English) :

Professor A. F. Rahman, M.A. (Oxon.), Chairman, Reception Committee, now Vice-Chancellor, Dacca University, observed in the course of his address :

"What is the mother-tongue of the Bengali Moslems? . . . It is evident our language is the language of our motherland. . . . It is a historical fact that the independent Moslem Sultans of Bengal were the great patrons of Bengali language ; it is due to their encouragement that modern Bengali has

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### <sup>2</sup> *Government Expenditure on Moslem Education (1931-31).*

For Madrassas	...	...	Rs. 5,30,053
„ Muktabs	...	...	„ 11,07,578
Islamia College	...	...	„ 31,191

Total ... Rs. 16,68,822

### Compare it with the Government expenditure on Sanskrit education.

Sanskrit College	...	...	Rs. 65,431
Stipends to Tols	...	...	„ 16,188
Grant to 2,004 Tols	...	...	„ 29,932

Total ... Rs. 1,11,551

attained to the position of a literature. . . . Under Sultan Nazir Shah the Mahabharata was rendered into Bengali and the poet Vidyapati has immortalised him in his songs.

"Hossain Shah was also a patron of Bengali literature. He engaged Maladhara Basu to translate the Bhagavat Purana into Bengali. . . . If the Moslems be only busy in bargaining with the Hindus for their demands and fail to attract the sympathy of the world of knowledge then they are doomed to lag behind."

Mr. Tussadaq Ahmed, Head Master of the local Government School, and President of the Conference remarked :

"I do not in the least hesitate to declare with all the emphasis I can command that Bengali is our mother tongue. If I do so I shall be abjuring my own mother. I trust I have not been reduced to such a degraded level. Indeed, there are Moslems, who are ashamed to acknowledge Bengali as their mother tongue . . . . The majority of the population consists of Moslems . . . . Can you force Urdu down their throats and will it be understood?

\* \* \* \* \*

In this land of ours we Hindus and Moslems have been living side by side for centuries. Both the communities are equally entitled to enrich our literature. I confess with shame, however, that while the eminent sons of Bengal have been slowly and silently creating this literature we have stood aloof, dreaming and looking towards Samarkand, Bokhara, Arab and Ispahan. In the early days of the introduction of English education, at the instigation of our short-sighted leaders we discarded English lest we might be converted into Kaffirs."

Mamtajjuddin Ahmed speaking at the above Conference observed:

"According to the plan sketched out by me the first step towards the improvement of our present educational system should be to discard the *foreign tongues*—Arabic, Persian and Urdu. The old Madrasahs should be abolished and we should follow in the wake of the Hindus."

Mr. Abul Hossain expresses his opinion on "the educational problem of the Bengali Moslems", thus :

"In vain do we search for the contributions of the Moslems in modern Philosophy and Science . . . . Is it not a matter of shame? The Moslem was once the harbinger of philosophy, art and science. To-day his descendant is enveloped in dark-

ness. Crozier in his *Progress and Civilisation* thus accounts for this degradation.

'Islam did open up an outlet for social aspect of human thought and aspiration but soon its secret structure began to reveal itself and was found to be incapable of expansion, devoid of sympathy and fatal to material and intellectual advancement. The Koran professed to be not only a spiritual revelation but a scientific treatise ; to close not only the book of inspiration but the book of knowledge. It accordingly discouraged all attempts of man to discover the order of the world and thereby to improve his condition ; while its central doctrine led him to repose indolently on the decrees of an inexorable fate. The consequence was under this belief human mind stagnated ; as we see at this hour in those nations that are deeply imbued with its spirit, progress, civilization and morality lie rotting together'.

'Raja Ram Mohun Roy was the first not only to raise his protest against the foundation of the Sanskrit College but also to plead for English education and western sciences.

'In our Madrassas we are resuscitating the teaching of Arabic, which means that the Muslim community will lag behind in the acquisition of modern ideas, that a knowledge of Arabic is inimical to our progress and does not equip us to meet the modern requirements, for, the struggle for existence has yet to be brought home to our co-religionists. The kind of education which does not improve the mind is simply suicidal to our community. Those who simply turn their eyes towards the past and forget the present cannot have their intellect emancipated. . . . The teaching imparted in our Madrassas ignores the progress of the modern world in philosophy, history, arts and sciences. . . . Unless one can keep pace with up-to-date progress, he is doomed. The instructions imparted in these antiquated institutions not only does not expand the mind but narrows it and holds out a premium to bigotry.'

We thus find that men of culture like Professor Rahman, Messrs. Abul Hossain, M. Ahmed, etc., are dead against the Madrassas and Muktabs and yet the vast sums of money which the Government earmarks for Moslem education alone are.

for perpetuating ignorance and mediævalism. Verily, our enlightened rulers have entered into an unholy alliance with obscurantists and messengers of darkness ; evidently the spread of western education is disliked and discouraged because it would open the eyes of the hopelessly backward Moslem community.

Yet another protest against the perpetuation of mediævalism by a Moslem leader.

"They have abolished the seventy year old Dar-ul-funun or University of Istanbul. The Istanbul University will be thoroughly recast along modern lines and another new National University will be established at Angora. The new Minister of Education of the Turkish Republic, Dr. Rashid Galip Bey, is a man of vision and has the courage of conviction. An Education Commission has been set up, which will guide the development of University, Secondary and Primary Education in Turkey along modern lines. In the new Universities there will be all the useful faculties in arts and sciences as well as in Fine Arts, Turcology and Islamic studies. The Faculty of Theology has been replaced by that of Islamic studies which will have a wider range and retain for Istanbul and Angora the possibilities of being true centres of Islamic knowledge and culture. A very notable reform is the establishment of a Bureau of Translation whose duty it will be to translate into new Turkish the works of world culture and literature as well as the best books of modern European learning. The Catholic outlook of the Turkish reformers is brought out into greater prominence when we learn that the masterpieces of all the great nations of the East and West, the Vedic literature of the Hindus, the Chinese philosophical works, the books of ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome, will be made available to the masses of Turkey in order that they may create new Turkish culture and science.

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"Turkey, Japan and Persia are showing how a nation, if allowed full freedom to develop according to its genius, can blaze a trail in the onward march of the humanity. . . . . To us in India, modern Turkey has a message. We are still trying to



have Gurukuls and Madrassas. Can we not see that both cannot flourish if they are antagonistically imbued? We must make a synthesis of both Islamic and Hindu culture in order to make a truly Indian culture. Those who still believe in Tanzim and Sangathan may do so ; but it seems to us that they are like the ostrich trying to hide their heads in the sand. For the time being their star seems to be in the ascendant. But they should be aware that nature has some forces such as floods and inundations which arrive without notice and carry everything before them. Who can tell that such floods will not come in the shape of economic forces and wash away all Tanzims and Sangathans?"—A Moslem Contributor in the *Patrika*.

I have quoted below the strong views of Mr. Abdus Samad and other cultured Moslems on the evils of maintaining the Madrassas and Muktabs and the "segregation system in education". Let me now quote the opinion of Mr. Surendra Narayan Singha, Chairman, Murshidabad District Board :

"Separate Maktab schools lead to retrograde the progress of the Mahomedans; the standard of literature taught in the Maktabs is inferior to the standard of the Pathshalas and thus when the Mahomedan boys after passing their Maktab education come to High English Schools they cannot generally compete with the Hindu boys in some subjects specially in Vernacular. The Hindus and the Mahomedans are both the inhabitants of the same village and they ought to live as peaceful neighbours and to look upon each other as friends; but inspite of that it has been noticed that communal tension prevailed in many places. There are no doubt other reasons for such tension; but if from the infancy we by our doings and action make the boys feel that they are separate, if they are forced to read in separate schools with the idea in their minds that primary schools are for the Hindus and the Maktabs for the Mahomedans, that is to say if we allow them to cherish the tendency of communalism in their minds from their childhood, it will be strange if we do not get bitter fruit when they become adult. Therefore it appears to me that it will do good to our country and communities if the spread of these separate organisations be stopped. It will save money from which we can afford better pay for the poor teachers and also introduce other forms of education, such as, knowledge of agriculture, hygiene and home industries, which have become an urgent need for the progress of our country."—*The Teachers' Journal*, August, 1934, p. 499.

"There is no doubt about the inefficiency of the primary schools in Bengal. 76 per cent. of these schools are managed by only one teacher. These teachers have to teach 3 classes simultaneously, most of them are untrained, they cannot read and write correctly, and so how will it be possible for them to teach the students?

"The Eighth Quinquennial Review of the Progress of Education in Bengal remarks that "we destroy whatever chance of literacy there may be by a system of teaching that is equivalent to a system of neglect." Moreover the teachers are poorly paid, they have to seek for other kinds of side work to meet the bare necessity of their family and hence they have to overwork and it could not be expected anything better than neglect."—S. N. Sinha, *ibid.*

"The renovation of nations begins always at the top among the reflecting members of the State and spread outward and downward," says James, but our rulers Canute-like would try to keep back the surging tide.

I can speak with confidence when I say that Bengal has no need of Tanzims and Sangathans and that in this struggle for the emancipation of the mind, the Moslems of Bengal can always count on the support of their Hindu brethren.

### III—CATHOLICITY OF THE HINDUS.

As we have already seen "English education was in a manner forced upon the British Government ; it did not itself spontaneously originate it" (see p. 33). Whatever progress has been achieved in this respect has been mainly due to the exertions and sacrifice of the Hindus. There are at present 1,243 H. E. Schools and 60 Colleges in Bengal. It is not too much to say that barely one per cent. of these institutions owe their existence to Moslem initiative ; one very outstanding feature of these schools and colleges is that their doors have always been flung wide open to every section of the people, irrespective of caste and creed, showing the catholicity of the Hindus. Some communally-minded Moslems are apt to ignore their indebtedness to the Hindus for what little progress their own community has made in English education. They conveniently forget that they have to thank themselves for their backwardness. Recently there was a discussion in the Bengal

Legislative Council on "inadequate provisions for Moslem representation in the different bodies of the University" (March, 1931). The reply given by a Hindu member, who has proved to be the worthy son of a worthy father, inasmuch as he has made the local University affairs his own, may be quoted here :

Mr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee : One of the grotesque suggestions made was that in the P.R.S., Ph.D., and D.Sc. Boards there is no Muhammadan. Surely you cannot have a Muhammadan to examine a thesis for Ph.D., or P.R.S. simply because he is a Muhammadan ; he must be a competent examiner, able to examine a thesis for your highest examinations before you can offer it to him. When all this has been said, no member has referred to the interest, the practical interest taken by the Muhammadans in the University. For instance, it has not been pointed out by any member to-day as to what benefactions the Muhammadan community has made to the University of Calcutta towards the advancement of learning. I have taken this illuminating figure from the University Calendar. Since 1906 the Calcutta University has received benefactions to the extent of Rs. 50,70,000 from public spirited gentlemen including the princely benefactions which came from three distinguished countrymen of ours, Sir Tarak Nath Palit, Sir Rash Behari Ghosh and Gurnuprasad Sinha, Kumar of Khaira, but what is the extent of the contribution which has been made by the Muhammadans ? Not more than Rs. 10,000 or Rs. 11,000 during these 24 years.

\* \* \* \* \*

If you want really to advance the best interests of the Muhammadan community and not the interests of particular individuals, it will not be by merely demanding that you should be given a larger number of posts, or there should be a certain number of Muhammadan clerks amongst the clerks appointed by the University or that a still larger number of Muhammadan duffries should be appointed by the University or that a larger number of persons should be appointed as members of the Senate or Syndicate. By all means capture a few more seats but at the same time do your level best to create public opinion amongst the members of your great community so that the fullest advantage may be taken by Moslem youngmen of the educational facilities which are thrown open by the University to all, irrespective of caste, creed or community. Let your claims be broad-based not on population or numerical strength but on quality and fitness.

A Moslem member who is absolutely free from any taint of communal bias also bore the following testimony to the part played by the Hindus.

Maulvi Abdus Samad: Sir, in making the imputation, the Khan Bahadur has taken up an attitude which is quite inconsistent with his views in politics and education. He belongs, I believe, to that section of the Muslim community who have been proclaiming from the house tops that the Hindus are our enemies and are, therefore, unworthy of our trust, and for that reason advocate segregation in politics and education.

\* \* \* \* \*

I can say, Sir, from my experience of 25 years of public life that the heart of the great Hindu community is all right. They are dying for unity and co-operation and in the larger interests of the country are prepared to be not only just but generous towards the Muslims in the settlement of communal problems, including services and other matters.

\* \* \* \* \*

We are always inclined to magnify their faults and shortcomings, but forget to acknowledge our indebtedness to them. We forget that the magnificent endowment of Rs. 50 lakhs, referred to by Mr. Syama-prasad Mookerjee, is intended for the benefit of all classes of students irrespective of their caste or creed. We forget that 99 per cent. of the private schools and colleges are maintained and financed by Hindu community and therein special facilities are provided for the education of the Muslim students.

\* \* \* \* \*

I refer, Sir, to their attitude towards the question of electorate. They know that the system of communal electorates has done them more harm than good, they know that it has alienated the sympathy of the Hindus towards the Muslims, and has brought in its train communal tension and communal riots; they know that under such a system fanaticism and conservatism has been given an opportunity to exercise a baneful influence in politics and has thereby retarded the much needed social reforms and educational progress among the Muslim community to a very large extent. They know all this and still they must have separate electorate. I have reason to believe, Sir, that the Muslim communalists are playing the game of the bureaucracy and are helping it in its policy of divide and rule. They pose as the friends of the Muslim community. God save the Muslims from their so-called friends.

Sir, the Muslims complain of their backwardness in education and other matters. Backward they are, but pray, who is responsible for

this? Sir, the Muslims of India, like the Jews of the old, are labouring under a mistaken notion that they are the chosen people of God and that their deliverance would come from Heaven without any effort or sacrifice on their part. This is a sad delusion. God never helps those who do not know how to help themselves. We fail to move with the time, we fail to understand the real teaching of the Great Prophet of Arabia; but instead we stick to mere dogmas and formalities which retard human progress. "Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave", "seek knowledge even if you get it in China", "the acquisition of knowledge is equally compulsory to men and women" are a few of the sayings of the Great Prophet. The knowledge at one time was interpreted as religious knowledge to be acquired through Arabic and this is the reason why the Muslims took to English education at least 50 years later than the other communities. Now, though their idea of knowledge has changed, the fascination of Arabic, Persian and Urdu still remains. A Bengali Muslim student must learn all these foreign tongues besides English and how can he be expected to compete with the Hindu students? Sir, Bengal contains about one-third of the total Muslim population of India. They speak the same language with the Hindus of Bengal and their culture, manners, habits and mode of living are more akin to the Hindus than to the Muslims of Western India. But poor Muslims of Bengal! Their educational policy is entrusted to and shaped by persons who have not only no touch with the vast Muslim population of Bengal but whose cultural affinity is more akin to Muslims of Western India than to Muslims of Bengal; the result has been disastrous. The system of education prevailing in Maktabas and Madrasahs is against their taste and genius, but still they must submit to it. The system of segregation in education has been strongly criticised in the Hartog Committee Report and also in the annual Education Administration Reports of Bengal but to no effect. Then take the case of female education. The same spirit of conservatism, which stood in the way of the education of the Muslim boys, stands now in the way of the education of Muslim girls. Sir, *pardah* and female education cannot go together. If the Muslim leaders are really anxious to educate the Muslim girls, they must take steps to relax the rigidity of the *pardah*. But this all-important social reform they do not venture to initiate for fear of offending the Mullas whose support, under the present system, plays a very important part at the time of Council elections. Sir, the laws of nature are everywhere the same and equally applicable to all. God has not made different laws for the Muslims. If they fail to follow these laws, they must lag behind in the race of human progress. No useful purpose would be served by accusing the Hindus of partiality and communalism.

Sir, at this critical juncture of Indian Mussalmans, a leader of the calibre of Sir Syed Ahmad is absolutely necessary. But under the existing constitution the advent of such a leader is well-nigh impossible."

#### IV—HINDUS AND MOSLEMS ETHNOLOGICALLY IDENTICAL.

But the real scientific explanation of the backwardness of the Moslem community is apt to be lost sight of as it is due to hereditary causes. There are no doubt several high families in whom culture, as also *noblesse oblige* predominates from generation to generation, as in the Nababs of Murshidabad or of Saistabad, in the Zemindar families of Karatia, Mymensingh or the Cazis of Tetulia (Khulna) etc., or converts from high caste Hindus.<sup>4</sup> But the very democratic character of Islam as also its absolute freedom from the curse of untouchability (cf. Vol. I. p. 502) has led to the dilution by intermarriage of the original Mogul, Pathan or Turcoman blood coursing in the veins of the aristocratic families. "Scratch a Bengali Moslem and you will find in him a Hindu", once exclaimed an educated young Moslem; in fact 99 per cent. of the Moslem population of Bengal are practically descendants of Hindu converts.<sup>5</sup> Hence linguistically and ethnologically

<sup>4</sup> Maulana Akram Khan, a staunch nationalist, claims as his ancestors Kulin Brahmins.

Cf. also: This chief [Isha Khan] was the grandson of Kalidas Gozdani, a Hindu, who, it is said, delighted in religious controversies, and having been worsted in argument by a learned Mussulman, acknowledged his defeat and embraced the faith of Islam.—*The Romance of an Eastern Capital* by Bradley-Birt.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. H. Yusuf Ali: "Racially, 80 per cent. or 90 per cent. of the Indian Muslims belong to ethnic stocks similar to those of their Hindu brethren in the different areas of India. But the foreign element—Arab, Persian, Afghan, Turk, or Mughal—formed the governing class in the days of Muslim rule, and they created a new social atmosphere for the Muslim community as a whole. Race is not recognised in Islam as a ground of differentiation or distinction, and intermarriage among the Muslims has tended to bring some homogeneity into the Muslim social fabric, though complete homogeneity has not yet been achieved."—*The Causes of War 1932*, p. 122.

and traditionally there is absolutely no distinction between a Hindu or a Moslem. The following extracts from eminent English authorities will bear me out.

"The Mohammedans of Eastern Bengal are almost all descended from low-caste or aboriginal Hindoos who long ago embraced Islam in hope of social improvement or from hard necessity.—Sir Henry Cotton: *Indian and Home Memories*.

Again: "It has already been noted that the affinities of the Muhammadans of East Bengal seem to be with the Pods and Chandals and those of North Bengal with the Rájbanis and Koches.

"The Musalman religion, with its doctrine that all men are equal in the sight of God, must necessarily have presented far greater attractions to the Chandáls and Koches, who were regarded as outcastes by the Hindus, than to the Bráhmans, Baidyas, and Káyasthas, who in the Hindu caste system enjoy a position far above their fellows. The convert to Islám could not of course expect to rank with the higher classes of Muhammadans, but he would escape from the degradation which Hinduism imposes on him; he would no longer be scorned as a social leper; the mosque would be open to him; the Mullah would perform his religious ceremonies, and, when he died, he would be accorded a decent burial.

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"It is not contended that the higher castes did not contribute their quota, but it was undoubtedly a comparatively small one".

"In Backergunge many Hindus became Musalmans after the Maghs had passed through their houses and so caused them to be outcasted.

"Although the days when Buddhism was a glowing faith had long since passed, the people of Bengal were still to a great extent Buddhistic, and when Bakhtyár Khilji conquered Bihar and massacred the Buddhist monks assembled at Odontapuri, the common people, who were already lukewarm, deprived of their priests and teachers, were easily attracted from their

old form of belief, some to Hinduism and others to the creed of Muhammad. The higher castes probably found their way back to Hinduism, while the Non-Aryan tribes who had, in all probability, never been Hindus, preferred the greater attractions of Islam.

"The dislike which educated Muhammadans have for the theory that most of the local converts in Eastern and Northern Bengal are of Chandál and Koch origin seems to be due to the influence of Hindu ideas regarding social status, according to which these tribes occupy a very degraded position."—*Census of India, 1901*, Vol. VI, Part I, by E. A. Gait.

Those who constantly din into our ears that the Hindus are more advanced in education are guilty of uttering half-truths. It is only the high caste Hindus—Baidyas, Brahmins and Kayasthas—and to some extent Telis, Sahas, Mahisyas and Namasudras that have made some progress in literacy. The rest of the Hindu population is hardly better off than the Moslems in the field of educational progress. But the Hindu population, out of the total of 50 millions approximately, amounts to 22·2 millions to which again the first three castes named above contribute only 3·3 millions; and judged by the standard of literacy in the advanced countries, even these three castes cut a sorry figure. From the *Census Report* of 1931 we find—

Literate (age 7, and over).				Literate in English (age 7, and over).			
Brahman	...	...	45%	3454	...	...	per 10,000
Baidya	...	...	63%	1736	...	...	" "
Kayastha	...	...	40%	1621	...	...	" "
Shaha	...	...	26%	662	...	...	" "
Mahishya	...	...	18%	252	...	...	" "
Jogi	...	...	14%	221	...	...	" "
Namasudra	...	...	8%	120	...	...	" "
Rajbangshi	...	...	5%		...	...	" "

Let our rulers by all means placate our Moslem brethren by showing special solicitude for their educational needs; but



what about the claims of the overwhelming majority of the Hindus? By all means, lift the veil of ignorance from the Moslems, but surely justice and statesmanship demand also that this should be done for the backward classes among the Hindus.

#### V—PRIMARY EDUCATION—THE ONLY REMEDY.

Progress and advancement of Bengal require that both the communities should march hand in hand. But the one thing needful, namely compulsory primary education by which both would be equally benefited, our rulers fight shy of.

Mr. Abdul Karim writes very thoughtfully on this point :—

“In all countries primary education has a greater importance than higher education. In India, where the upper and middle classes are numerically insignificant, its importance is far greater than elsewhere. The comparative backwardness of India in almost every sphere of human activity may be traced to her illiteracy. It is because the masses are illiterate that they are swayed by superstition and prejudice, know little of sanitation and hygiene and are carried off by thousands every year by cholera, malaria and other preventible diseases, have to depend upon the freaks of nature for the success or failure of their crops, fall victims to the mischievous machinations of political self-seekers and religious fanatics, who exploit them whenever it suits their purpose. Unless and until illiteracy is wiped out from the land, there can be little progress, social, economic or political. It is education, and nothing but education, that can remove social evils, sanitary troubles and economic distress from the country, and can awaken political consciousness and create social solidarity in the people. Self-government without literacy would be nothing but a farce, and might possibly be a tragedy.

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“The responsibility of a civilised government in making the people literate cannot be over-stressed. To regard expenditure for this purpose as one of the first charges upon a country’s revenues, would be certainly an act of wisdom. In this con-

nection I should not omit to mention that the indigenous and inexpensive education in vogue before, was more suited to the social and economic conditions of the people. Its replacement by an exotic system, which prefers book education to nature study, insists on reading more than on thinking, fosters an artificial taste for unnecessary things and costs much more than what poor people can afford to bear, has made education rather unpopular with the masses. I need hardly say that a thorough over-hauling of the system in order to make it natural, simple, inexpensive, modern, but true to India's genius and suited to the requirements of the masses is urgently necessary. Such a system of primary education must be made universal, free and compulsory, simultaneously with the inauguration of responsible self-government, if not before."

#### VI—CALCUTTA CORPORATION AND PRIMARY EDUCATION.

The following review in the Bengal Government's Quinquennial Report on Education provides an eloquent comment on the educational activities of the Government as contrasted with those of the Calcutta Corporation whose affairs are now managed by the nationalists :<sup>6</sup>

"In all directions and particularly in the sphere of primary education, unmistakable evidence is forthcoming that the quality of the work done and the results achieved do not repay the expenditure of money and effort. Better trained and better paid teachers are essential.

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The total expenditure on secondary education which amounted to Rs. 1,07,37,075 in 1926-27, rose in 1931-32 to Rs. 1,22,01,808 of which about 18 per cent. came from public sources, 67 per cent. from fees and 15 per cent. from other

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<sup>6</sup> This has been possible because the Calcutta Corporation has got a free hand and is to a great extent independent of Government control. The rate-payers, of which the overwhelming majority are Hindus, encourage the introduction of compulsory primary education.

sources ; i.e. 82 per cent. was contributed by the people themselves.

The number of boys' primary schools increased from 38,187 to 43,718, the rate of increase being twice as rapid as in the previous quinquennium. The total number of pupils rose from 1,398,942 to 1,682,275. The number of Moslems in the primary stage increased by 20·4 per cent. in this period.

The spread of primary education, however, is not as satisfactory as the figures would imply : ' the wastage was very great and the number of those who read up to class IV was comparatively small : *in fact according to the census figures of 1921 and 1931 the percentage of literacy actually fell during that period.* When, however, the conditions under which such education is carried on are realised, it is hardly surprising that so little real advance has been made. The village environment and public opinion generally are not such as to encourage education and there is no immediate inducement to the attainment of literacy. On an average there is 1.5 teacher to each primary school, so that any individual attention is impossible even if the teachers are willing to give it. Most of the teachers are ill-paid and untrained and there are no counterbalancing amenities to attract them.

It is indeed time that a systematic effort was made to remove the prevailing illiteracy.

There has been a remarkable expansion of primary education in Calcutta where the Corporation has extended its scheme of free primary education and now has 146 boys' schools with 17,415 pupils. The total number of primary schools was 229 with 30,064 pupils. The expenditure rose from Rs. 3,17,262 to Rs. 11,44,075 and the Corporation has now received sanction to introduce a system of compulsory education in one ward''.

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' The increase of scholars is, however, chiefly in the primary stage and it does not necessarily lead to a proportionate increase in the number of literates, on account of the wastage from stage to stage..

## VII—BENGAL PRIMARY EDUCATION ACT.

“The outstanding feature of the period was the enactment in 1930 of the Bengal (Rural) Primary Education Act, which provides for the establishment of District School Boards as the central authority for primary education in each district, and affords the machinery for the eventual development of free and compulsory primary education throughout the province. For its financing the scheme depends in the main upon the imposition of a primary education cess, and it is a matter of regret that owing to the prevailing depression it has not been found possible to impose additional taxation on the rural population.<sup>a</sup>

“The difficulties of the college authorities were increased, when Government found itself compelled to suspend the Imperial grant of Rs. 1,29,000 on which private colleges had become accustomed to depend for the purchase and renewal of laboratory and library equipment.

“Increased rates of fees in all colleges appear to provide the only means of effecting a general improvement in college finances and in normal times would be completely justifiable, but whether at the present time such increase would impose undue hardships and result in decreased roll strength, thus defeating the object in view, is a matter that requires consideration.”—*Eighth Quinquennial Report on the Progress of Education in Bengal*.

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<sup>a</sup> In other words, to enjoy the luxury of primary education, you must bear additional taxation; but no retrenchment is to be effected in the costly administration. The Education Minister and his colleagues must unblushingly pocket Rs. 64,000/- per year.

## APPENDIX

### ECHOES OF THE CONTROVERSY BETWEEN THE ORIENTALISTS AND ANGLICISTS IN BOMBAY AND MADRAS—ENGLISH VS. VERNACULAR AS THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION.

The echoes of the controversy between the orientalist and anglicist schools reached Bombay and Madras and there was a sharp difference of opinion among the two schools of thought. The relative claims of English and the Vernacular as the medium of instruction also gave rise to acrimonious discussions. We cannot do better than allow the prominent actors to speak for themselves.

#### MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION.

The despatch of the Court of Directors (1841) did not express any decided opinion as to the medium of instruction and on this question the opinions of those responsible for education were divided as indeed they still are. The subject is dealt with in an interesting manner by Mr. F. Bontros in his "Report of an enquiry into the system of education likely to be generally popular and beneficial in Bihar and the Upper Provinces." The conclusions at which he arrives are very similar to those expressed by Captain Candy, Superintendent of the Poona Sanskrit College, in the following extract from his Report for the year 1840.

"It seems to me that too much encouragement cannot be given to the study of English, nor too much value put upon it in its proper place and connection in a plan for the intellectual and moral improvement of India. This place I conceive to be that of supplying ideas and the matter of instruction, not that of being the medium of instruction. The medium through which the mass of the population must be instructed I humbly conceive must be their Vernacular tongues, and neither English nor Sanskrit. Knowledge must be drawn from the stores of the English language, the Vernacular must be employed as the media of communicating it."

#### EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTE BY SIR H. PERRY (1847).

Colonel Jervis, on the contrary, thinks that a great deal too much attention is paid to English education, that the chief object of our exertions should be to produce a vernacular literature.

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Colonel Jervis seems to think that a vernacular literature, and men of genius, can be raised to order. I, on the other hand, conceive that Government is exceedingly impotent in these matters, that all that statesmen can do, is to watch carefully the indications of the phenomena which the thoughts, habits, and dispositions of the people evolve in their daily growth and then to mould them to the best of their ability. But if any phenomenon connected with education presents itself in a more marked form than another, during the experience of the last 25 years, it is this that the tendency and desire of the Natives throughout India is to acquire a knowledge of the English language.

MINUTE BY JUGGANATH SUNKER SERT (1847).

I am persuaded that the Vernacular languages possess advantages superior to English, as the medium of communicating useful knowledge to the people of Western India. It cannot be denied that they must have less difficulty in understanding whatever is communicated to them in their own language, than in a foreign tongue. When a native is inclined to prosecute the study of English, his progress is more rapid, and his usefulness doubled, provided he be first well-grounded in his own language. I say his usefulness will be increased, because it is only by this preparation that any knowledge he may have required can be imparted by him to his countrymen through the medium of the Vernacular language. It is in my humble opinion an impossibility to teach the great mass of the people a language, such as English, so widely different from their own. If our object is to diffuse knowledge and improve the minds of the natives of India as a people, it is my opinion that it must be done by imparting that knowledge to them in their own language.

MINUTE BY COLONEL JERVIS (1847).

Surely it must be admitted that general instruction cannot be afforded, except through the medium of a language with which the mind is familiar; and therefore the consistent result of the views above mentioned, which would constitute English the essential medium for the intellectual improvement of the Natives of India, startling though it must appear to the commonest sense, is to withhold all education from the Native population of this country, until the English language is so familiar to them, that each individual can think and reason in that tongue, to the supersession necessarily of his own dialect: and moreover, strange to say, the idea of making English the sole language of our Indian subjects has been seriously entertained and propounded. It is unnecessary to enlarge upon the chimerical nature, to say the least, of such extreme view; but the conclusion appears incontrovertible,

that in proportion as we confine education to the channel of the English language, so will the fruits be restricted to a number of scribes and inferior Agents for Public and Private Offices, and a few enlightened individuals, isolated by their very superiority, from their fellow countrymen.

#### GOVERNMENT OF BOMBAY ON MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION (1848).

Whether the English or Native languages should be the medium through which to convey the instruction to the people of India. With respect to this question, I am directed to observe that the Hon'ble the Governor in Council is of opinion that any one, who observes and compares the proficiency attained by the pupils in the English and Vernacular schools, cannot fail to be convinced of the superiority which the latter manifest in sound and accurate understanding of the subject of their studies. He has no hesitation in declaring his acquiescence in the view of those who give the preference to the Native languages, in so far that he considers the main efforts for the general education of the people should be exerted in the language familiar to them from infancy : at the same time he would unquestionably afford them the means of acquiring the higher branches of education in the English languages. Hitherto, the greatest attention appears to have been devoted to the study of English, and the communication of knowledge in the Vernacular seems to have been treated as of secondary moment; but before any lasting or effectual impression can be made by our teaching upon the native mind in general, or any advance towards producing better, more learned, or more moral men, the Governor in Council feels convinced that the process must be reversed, and that the Vernacular must become the medium for the diffusion of sound knowledge among the masses.

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The chief and greatest exertions should be directed to the promotion generally of education, by means of Vernacular classes and schools. Good elementary works in the Vernacular, on science, literature and morals ought to be provided; while the efforts in English should be confined to a school in each Province, and the College at the Presidency, where, moreover, the higher branches of learning should be taught also in the Vernacular tongue, as the progress of translations may enable this to be effected.

#### MINUTE BY SIR E. PERRY ON THE GOVERNMENT POLICY (1848).

The considerations mentioned in the earlier part of this Report and general experience in India, appear to show that the higher branches of education can only be taught effectively through the medium of the

English language, while on the other hand, the great mass of the population, who have but little time to bestow in school attendance, can derive most readily a portion of elementary knowledge by the means of Vernacular instruction.

EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTE BY J. P. WILLOUGHBY (1850).

I concur generally in the Right Hon'ble the Governor's remarks in his minute of the 9th September last; I would, however, express more decidedly that, in the opinion of Government, too much attention is at present paid to English, and too little to Vernacular instruction and that our educational funds are too unequally apportioned between these two branches of education.

VIEWS OF MR. THOMAS (MADRAS).

But about this time (1853) the pendulum action so often observable in Indian administration began to swing forward again, and the authorities of the day, among whom the Governor Sir H. Pottinger, and Mr. Thomas, then Chief Secretary to Government of Madras and also a Member of the Council of Education, were most conspicuous, began to revert to the views entertained by Sir Thomas Munro, in favour of primary education for the masses having the first claim to assistance from the State. They were of opinion that the system which had been adopted, both in Madras and in the Bengal Presidency and which contemplated the imparting of a high measure of education to the few, and exclusively through the medium of English, must fail to produce any great or general effect upon the national mind. Mr. Thomas' view deserve to be recorded even in the very brief outline that is given here. He declared that such a system was a reversal of the natural order of things, and that the attempt to educate and enlighten a nation through a foreign language, was opposed to the experience of all times and countries, and that English must ever be in this land to the masses an unknown tongue.

"A smattering of English may be acquired by a considerable number about our towns, or in immediate communication with the few English residing in India; but the people (the women as well as men) will, as a whole, only think and speak and read in their native tongues, and their general enlightenment or education must, and, I believe, can, only be attained through this channel; and a wide basis, therefore, of a solid, though limited, education, through the means of the vernacular languages, must be given to those classes which now receive education, before anything permanent will be effected.

"It is upon this broad basis alone that the superstructure of a high standard and refined education can, it appears to me, be raised; and



the superior acquirements of the few very highly educated be made to tell upon and influence society. For let us suppose that we have some tens or even scores of youths, out of a population of millions, masters of the higher sciences, well acquainted with all the beauties of Shakespeare, of Milton, and with the learning of Bacon, and with the great master-minds of Europe, and the rest of the people, not the lowest classes alone, left in their hereditary ignorance, and that ignorance, Asiatic. I cannot but think that the only result of a system which educates a few highly and leaves the rest of the population without even elementary instruction, is to render all the superior acquirement of that few (made moreover at an enormous cost to the State), barren and fruitless as to any general influence upon Society."

EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTE BY J. E. D. BETHUNE (1851).<sup>9</sup>

I have never neglected any opportunity of inculcating the importance of inducing the students of our college to cultivate also their native language; but I have addressed these exhortations to our English schools, firmly believing that it is through them only that we can expect to produce any marked improvement in the customs and ways of thinking of the inhabitants of India. I am, therefore, alarmed at the doctrine openly professed by Mr. Willoughby and concurred in by the Government of Bombay that "he ranges with those who think that our object should be to impart a moderate degree of useful knowledge to the masses throughout the Presidency, rather than that our efforts should be exclusively directed to train up a few first rate scholars in the schools at Bombay." In another passage duly following this in the same minute, he seems to consider the main purpose of our schools to be the training up of "good *Manchett*das, good *Moonsiffs*, good village accountants, good police *pestells* and a host of other minor native functionaries" "for the public service." I entirely dissent from this doctrine. I believe it to be equally opposed to the sentiments entertained by the most enlightened among our predecessors who have devoted their zeal and talent to the cause of native education, and to the instructions of the Hon'ble Court. I see the reasonable grounds that there are for hoping that, by the hold which the English ideas are gradually gaining on our most advanced students, we may, in the course of another generation at farthest, have the powerful support of a numerous native party in urging us on to attack and alleviate some of the most prominent social evils of the country. The great curse of caste, infant marriages, polygamy and the enforced celibacy of widows,

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<sup>9</sup> Legal Member of the Council of the Government of India and President of the Council of Education.

with all the crimes and abomination that follow in their train, are mainly supported by superstitions which melt away, like snow before fire, when brought into direct contact with European knowledge and this work is being gradually but surely done in our Bengal schools and colleges.

EXTRACTS FROM EDUCATIONAL DESPATCH OF 1854—EDUCATION OF THE  
MASSES ONLY POSSIBLE THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF VERNACULAR.

The despatch of the Court of Directors of 1854 has been described as "The Magna Charta of English Education in India." In his minute Lord Dalhousie declared that it contained "a scheme of education for all India, far wider and more comprehensive than the Local or the Supreme Government could ever have ventured to suggest." An immediate outcome of this despatch was the passing of the three University Acts of 1857.

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In some parts of India, more especially in the immediate vicinity of the presidency towns, where persons who possess a knowledge of English are preferred to others in many employments, public as well as private, a very moderate proficiency in the English language is often looked upon by those who attend school instruction as the end and object of their education rather than as a necessary step to the improvement of their general knowledge. We do not deny the value in many respects of the mere faculty of speaking and writing English, but we fear that a tendency has been created in these districts unduly to neglect the study of the vernacular language.

It is neither our aim nor desire to substitute the English language for the vernacular dialects of the country. We have always been most sensible of the importance of the use of the languages which alone are understood by the great mass of the population. These languages, and not English, have been put by us in the place of Persian in the administration of justice and in the intercourse between the officers of Government and the people. It is indispensable, therefore, that in any general system of education, the study of them should be assiduously attended to, and any acquaintance with improved European knowledge which is to be communicated to the great mass of the people—whose circumstances prevent them from acquiring a high order of education, and who cannot be expected to overcome the difficulties of a foreign language—can only be conveyed to them through one or other of those vernacular languages.

In the memorable and spirited letter of Ram Mohun Roy addressed to Lord Amherst, there is a strong plea for the teaching of European

Physical Sciences, no doubt, through the medium of English; but a century and a decade has elapsed since then; Ram Mohun himself realised that if his enlightened views were to be brought home to the majority of his countrymen, he must make use of the vernacular. Hence his denunciation of *Suttee*, his advocacy of female education and his crusade against idolatry were conducted in Bengali. Nay, he founded the periodical, *Sambadkaumudi* for his propaganda. Along with Carey and his school Ram Mohun is regarded as a founder of modern Bengali prose.

#### PATHETIC APPEAL FOR MASS EDUCATION.

"It would be extremely ridiculous in me to sit down to write to the Government or to you a sentence even upon the benefit of teaching the children of the peasantry of this country to read and write. I shall merely observe that the greatest difficulty the Government suffers in its endeavours to govern well, springs from the immorality and ignorance of the mass of the people, their disregard of knowledge not connected with agriculture and cattle and particularly their ignorance of the spirit, principles and system of the British Government.

"It was long ago evident to me that to commence a plan which might in time extend to a general arrangement for the instruction of a portion of the children of the peasantry, or as would be commonly called the zemindars, to imbue them with the elements of knowledge, which would excite a spirit of learning and information, was the only way of laying the foundation for the advancement of the people in moral conduct.

"The establishment of schools in cities and towns is comparatively speaking of secondary consideration—the majority of children of classes that inhabit cities and towns are educated by their parents. It is the children of zemindars, of the peasantry, of men enjoying hereditary and paternal lands in their own right, the mass of the people; thousands to one of the people that require this instruction and will benefit by it. I seek, therefore, a provision by Government for these four schools already established and reimbursement for the sums which have been laid out upon them. I propose too that a general measure should be authorised for preparing a sufficient number of boys out of the peasantry to receive instruction in the primary branches of education by teaching them to read and write the Persian and Hindee and if possible the English language. For instance, by a Census for the Western Division there is, we find, a population of 2,19,929 contained in 47,018 houses and families. In this population there are 38,115 boys below 14 years of age; about 19,053 below 7 years of age. But the class I allude to, the landowning peasantry, the zemindars as they are called, is rated at 1,20,026 souls—although there are many other cultivators—so that the

boys for education may be estimated at about 1,000 and if one in twenty-five or one in ten or twelve families be taught to read and write, that is, four in a hundred or forty in a thousand, four hundred boys would be fitted to acquire a knowledge of our principles of Government and our system, and to impart this knowledge by actual contact with two hundred and twenty thousand souls. The expense of these institutions as it must be begun, would be Rs. 175 for a hundred boys a month, or seven hundred rupees a month for four hundred boys or Rs. 8,400 a year, but if it were possible to supply masters capable of teaching on the Lancastrian principle the expenses would be much less.

"If Government will give any consideration to my proposal I can pledge myself to carry it into execution and that it be acknowledged by the people as the greatest benefit Government could confer upon them."<sup>10</sup>

The General Committee of Public Instructions in a letter to Government dated 29th November, 1823, animadverted upon Mr. Fraser's proposal and based their refusal of support upon the fact that it was expedient that the appropriation of any limited funds assigned for the purpose of public education should be chiefly directed to the best means of improving the education of the more respectable members of Indian Society.

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<sup>10</sup> From a letter by W. Fraser, Member, Board of Revenue, Delhi to the Chief Secretary to Government in the Judicial Department, Fort William—25th September, 1823.

# SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROBLEMS

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE MENTALITY AND PSYCHOLOGY OF THE YOUTH OF BENGAL.<sup>1</sup>

Some 30,000 young men are reading in the colleges of Bengal. The idea uppermost in the mind of almost all our hopefuls is that on finishing his college career and taking his degree he will qualify himself for a Government post—the I. C. S., or B. C. S. dangling before his imagination—and, failing that, he thinks of joining the congested profession of law or medicine. An English youth, on the other hand, has his imagination fired when he reads the heroic exploits of a Marlborough, or a Clive, or a Wellington, or a Drake, or a Nelson, or of orators like Burke, Sheridan, Fox or Bright, or of statesmen like Chatham, Pitt and Gladstone. If he has a taste for fine arts he can aspire one day to rise to the eminence of a Reynolds, a Landseer, a Turner or a Millais. The lives of English architects, industrialists, merchant-princes and explorers no less fill him with emulation. Centuries of foreign domination have dwarfed the noble aspirations and ideals of the youth of Bengal. Take at random any story or novel of modern life. The hero is either a zemindar, a munsiff, or a deputy magistrate or a lawyer or even a 'collegian' living in a mess on the bare income of a scholarship. I am not referring to the dramas and novels in which Rajput heroism, patriotism and chivalry play a conspicuous part. The plots in these are always borrowed from incidents narrated by Todd in his *Annals of Rajasthan*. An Irish patriot has well said: "A dramatist cannot make a great play out of a little people". If the young man harbours patriotic impulses, woe to him; he becomes a suspect and is shadowed day and night by the C. I. D. He must be prepared to pay a heavy price for it, and terrible examples confront him every day; with his humdrum, unromantic life,

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<sup>1</sup> What has been said in this Chapter of the youth of Bengal applies in all essentials to the youth of other provinces.

his vision narrow and outlook very circumscribed, he starts on his career with a handicap. Even the chimera he has so long pursued—the securing of a comfortable job—recedes from his horizon like the treacherous will-o'-the-wisp as soon as he leaves college. Unhappily the disillusionment comes late. He solves problems on probabilities, but forgets to apply them in his own case. The number of suitable appointments which fall vacant every year can be counted at the finger's ends and the professions are overcrowded. Yet he and his guardians, and the guardians are more to blame, will take no heed or warning. The students go on swelling the rank of the unemployed, while all our trade, both internal and external, commerce and industry, are slipping into the hands of Europeans and non-Bengalis. It is a terrible loss, nay, a catastrophe—this wastage of the energies of a people.

#### I—DANGER OF MODERN SYSTEM OF EDUCATION.

I have recently come across a remarkable confirmation of my viewpoint in the writings of an eminent Frenchman, M. Le Bon, who has made a psychological study of this problem. It is so very pertinent to the subject matter of this chapter that I need not make any apology for quoting the passage *in extenso*. Says this author, commenting on the French system of education:—

The primary danger of this system of education—very properly qualified as Latin—consists in the fact that it is based on the fundamental psychological error that the intelligence is developed by the learning by heart of text books. Adopting this view, the endeavour has been made to enforce a knowledge of as many hand-books as possible. From the primary schools till he leaves the university a young man does nothing but acquire books by heart without his judgment or personal initiative being ever called into play. Education consists for him in reciting by heart and obeying.

Were this education merely useless, one might confine oneself to expressing compassion for the unhappy children \* \* \*. But the system presents a far more serious danger. It gives those who have been submitted to it a violent dislike to the state of life in which they were born, and an intense desire to escape from it. The working man no longer wishes to remain a working man, or the peasant to continue a

peasant, while the most humble members of the middle classes admit of no possible career for their sons except that of State-paid functionaries. Instead of preparing men for life French schools solely prepare them to occupy public functions, in which success can be attained without any necessity for self-direction or the exhibition of the least glimmer of personal initiative. At the bottom of the social ladder the system creates an army of proletarians discontented with their lot and always ready to revolt, while at the summit it brings into being a frivolous bourgeoisie at once sceptical and credulous having a superstitious confidence in the State, whom it regards as a sort of Providence, but without forgetting to display towards it a ceaseless hostility, always laying its own faults to the door of the Government, and incapable of the least enterprise without the intervention of the authorities.

The State, which manufactures by dint of text-books all these persons possessing diplomas, can only utilise a small number of them, and is forced to leave the others without employment. It is obliged in consequence to resign itself to feeding the first-mentioned and to having the others as its enemies. From the top to the bottom of the social pyramid, from the humblest clerk to the professor and the prefect, the immense mass of persons boasting diplomas besiege the professions. While a business man has the greatest difficulty in finding an agent to represent him in the colonies, thousands of candidates solicit the most modest official posts. There are 20,000 school masters and mistresses without employment in the department of Seine alone, all of them persons who, disdaining the fields or the workshops, look to the State for their livelihood. The number of the chosen being restricted, that of the discontented is perforce immense. The latter are ready for any revolution, whoever be its chiefs and whatever the goal they aim at. The acquisition of knowledge for which no use can be found is a sure method of driving a man to revolt.—*The Crowd*, pp. 103-5.

What Le Bon wrote about French graduates and diploma-holders about 30 years ago is true of Bengal to-day—only the tragedy is ten times worse. France is a first-rate power with an extensive colonial empire ; and she herself has been the prolific mother of scientists, philosophers, poets, artists, and litterateurs. Although behind England and Germany in industrial enterprises, in sericulture, in the manufacture of wines and perfumes, and in many other fields, she holds her own and can thus absorb a large number of graduates, experts and technicians. In Bengal on the other hand, the avenues of employment

are extremely narrow;<sup>2</sup> yet our young men will doggedly persist in choosing the beaten track.

The All-India Universities' Conference which recently met at Delhi bestowed serious attention on this pressing problem. In this conference, "there was general recognition of the fact that the largely increasing numbers of undergraduates, many of whom are unfitted for university teaching, present a great obstacle to the universities in providing a high standard of instruction, and also accentuate the problem of unemployment bureaus and other forms of inquiry, which, though possibly beneficial in individual cases, did not touch the main problem. One has to get at the root of the matter. Something must be done to reduce the unwieldy numbers of students presenting themselves for university education. The Conference recommended a drastic reconstruction of our school system so as to divert large numbers of boys at the pre-university stage either to occupations in life or to separate vocational institutions."

"This would not necessarily constitute a hardship. There are many students whose bent does not lie in literary studies; there are many on whom a university education is obviously wasted. If this principle was enforced, universities would be in a position to impose higher standards of admission, while boys not proceeding on a university course would be absorbed into occupations for which they are best suited. It is estimated that of the half million and odd youths and girls in secondary schools at present, more than 50 per cent. are unnecessarily

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<sup>2</sup> About 1,600 candidates are, it is reported, appearing for a Public Service Commission Examination. The number of vacancies is only twelve. Of these, we are told, six are offered for open competition, the rest being reserved for minority communities. The examination fees paid by these 1,600 candidates will come to a good round figure. It will not be, therefore, a bad bargain for the Government. But there is another side, which one cannot think of with equanimity. One cannot explain the number by supposing that Government service has any special lure in comparison with non-Government service. It is only because avenues of employment are so scarce that 1,600 educated young men are trying their luck for twelve vacancies.



and fruitlessly prolonging their periods of study."—*The Times of India*, March 14, 1934.

Sir Charles Grant Robertson, Principal of the University of Birmingham, drawing on forty years' experience of university life and work was convinced that "the percentage of really first class brains in a nation is not more than 5 p.c. of the whole, and the success of a university depends on securing its share of this 5 p.c. The ploughed B.A. is not a university but a civic and social problem. The B.A. who ought to have been ploughed but some how or other was not is the real problem of university education and appointment boards". If this is true of England, the appointment bureaus in India are naturally filled with dismay at the appalling nature of their task—specially when it is remembered that the education which an average student picks up in a college is of the poorest quality.<sup>3</sup> Yet, inspite of this gloomy and dismal picture, our youngmen will not think seriously of any other opening in life. The following note is also relevant.

## II—UNEDUCATED GREAT MEN: SHAW AND BARRIE.—THE VALUE OF COLLEGE LIFE.

"As a profoundly uneducated man, a municipal secondary school product, I have long been painfully aware of the deep social gulf that separates peoples like me from our betters, who have been to public schools and universities," writes H. W. Seaman in *The Sunday Chronicle*.

"How I envy University men! Every time I have had to discharge one of them from a newspaper office for incompetence my inferiority complex has given me a dreadful quarter of an hour.

"Few of the millionaires I know are public school and University men, and so I am conscious of no inferiority

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<sup>3</sup> Any one who has the patience to go through the bulky evidence appended to the Report of the Calcutta University Commission will not fail to be struck with the consensus of opinion on this subject; witness after witness lays stress on the fact that our schools and colleges have degenerated into so many cramming institutions where only the mnemonic faculty is exercised.

complex in their presence. Some of them actually have dialects. Very few eminent men of my acquaintance speak public school.

"As for me, having failed in all these years to discover what education is, I am content to set myself down as uneducated. So, by the way, is Lady Londonderry, who confessed the other day that having never been to a University she was 'hardly educated' at all in the ordinary sense of the word.

"But what is education? I have tried hard to find out and have applied for information to some of the teachers who, years ago, tried to drive some of their esoteric lore into the seat of my trousers.

"Bernard Shaw, for example, is uneducated, as I am. Whatever opinions I may hold of his eccentric habits (and I have aired them here from time to time) I believe that he is the greatest writer of English prose since Swift. And he is not even a D. Litt. In fact, he turned down a D. Litt. when a University offered to pin one on him. He was wise. It would have sat as badly on him as a tail".

In the pursuit of an ideal, sometimes, I am afraid, ill-directed, the Bengali youth has been known since the days of the partition of Bengal to perform prodigies of heroism ; in fact, he was all along spoiling for an opportunity to wipe out the reproach of cowardice. Lads barely in their teens have cheerfully mounted the scaffold and swung from the gallows. As a protest against the harsh and inhuman codes of jail discipline he has fasted as many as sixty three days and courted slow death by inches to the admiration of the world. In famine and flood relief organisations he has borne his due share. All this is to his credit.

There is unfortunately the debit side. In matters involving social reforms he has been found wanting. He fights shy of marrying out of his own caste and hesitates in levelling down the artificial barriers and inequalities interposed between the thousand and one sects and sub-sects in the Hindu social hierarchy. In this respect the Chinese student has an immense

advantage over him. All authorities agree in asserting that China is the least caste-ridden country in the world and untouchability has been unknown there for the last three thousand years. Hence the student in China can mix on equal terms with his teeming millions of brethren in the villages; on the other hand, the aloofness and isolation of the Bengali youth from the masses is the most distressing feature in his character.

### III—THE YOUTH MOVEMENT IN CHINA.

I give below some extracts from the writings of Tsi C. Wang (*The Youth Movement in China*) to indicate what the student population is doing for the Chinese masses.

"Students of colleges and secondary schools have maintained schools for illiterates all over the nation.

"During the summer vacation, the students return to their native villages, towns, and cities to open free schools, principally for children, but at the same time talking to adult audiences. They usually turn temples into schools and temple-yards into playgrounds. And again, they help the schools in their respective localities as voluntary teachers in music, games, etc."

"Since the Student Movement", wrote Lo Cia-lung, "the people awakened as if from a dream, realizing that the old ways are no longer suitable to the new conditions, and they all look to the new ways which come with youth. Previous to the student movement, those engaged in the Literary Revolution, and the Thought Revolution were merely those connected with *The New Youth* and *The Renaissance*, *The Weekly Review*, and a few dailies. But after the student movement, about 400 kinds of periodicals were published. Although their contents vary, they show their general willingness to take part in the various contemporary movements. Before the student movement, the vernacular language was used by only a few; but since the student movement, not only have most of the newspapers used the vernacular writing, but the national educational organizations have been greatly in-

fluenced . . . This shows the dynamic power of students . . . their capacity for free expression . . . the manifestation of their individuality."

Again: "As early as the summer of 1919, the students scattered all over China peddling goods and as Dr. John Dewey said, 'Speaking, speaking, speaking'. During the academic year, they addressed the people in the neighbourhood of their schools, and during the summer vacation, dispersed to the towns and villages and gave lectures whenever possible. It has become a duty of their school work to go out voluntarily to give lectures to the common people in cities, towns, and villages. They are usually organised in different schools into what they call 'Popular Lecturing Teams', made up, usually of college and high school students. They are of different types: some are accompanied by music (vocal or instrumental), some do just pure lecturing, and others give student-plays. The teams usually go out on week-ends, or in the evenings and on holidays. The subjects of their lectures range from 'Personal Hygiene' and 'Science' to 'International Problems'. Students of colleges and secondary schools have maintained schools for illiterates all over the country."

Another authority writes:—

"In 1921, when I visited government and private schools in ten of the provinces, scarcely a school was found, even among those of an elementary character, that was not conducting a free school for poor children, taught and supported either by teachers or pupils or both."

"Experiments were begun with the idea of producing one hundred per cent. literacy, in this limited sense, in certain communities within five years' time".—Monroe: *China*, p. 284.

Bertrand Russell, who was for some time Professor of Philosophy in the University of Peking, in his authoritative book, *The Problem of China*, quotes Mr. Tyau from his chapter "On the Student Movement" as follows:—

"The students then directed their energies to the enlightenment of their less educated brothers and sisters. For instance, by issuing publications, by popular lectures showing them the real situation,

internally as well as externally, but especially by establishing free schools and maintaining them out of their own funds. No praise can be too high for such self-sacrifice, for the students generally also teach in these schools. The scheme is endorsed everywhere with the greatest enthusiasm and in Peking alone it is estimated that fifty thousand children 'are benefited by such education' " (p. 223).

While correcting proofs, I come across the following account by Reuter :

*Mass Education in China.*

"The system of mass education is being revolutionized in China.

"Because of the lack of teachers, specially women teachers, and of other problems caused by tradition, students are being made into teachers, and the move has met with unprecedented success.

"The students attend school during the day, and go out at night to teach, instructing both young and old. Some of the great difficulties of Chinese education have been solved by this method.

"The 'child-teachers' have been most effective among women. In one family, for instance, a six-year-old grandson taught his 60-year-old grandmother how to read in a short space of time.

"There are 27 child-teaching centres in China, several of which have been operating successfully near Shanghai"—19 Oct., 1934.

IV—WHY THE BENGALIS FAIL?

In congenial work lies the real sauce of life. Our young men disappointed in not finding a job as soon as they come out of the college, cannot take to any occupation, but simply move away, lose all interest in life and becoming victims of semi-starvation, fall easy prey to diseases and are prematurely cut off ; if, however, like the Chinese students they could catch sustained enthusiasm for serving the motherland, they would find their lives amply worth living.

In Bengal we have five to six months' holidays (including the summer vacation) in the schools and colleges and full seven months' in the post-graduate classes. The total number of school and college-going pupils in Bengal comes up to not less than 300,000; if they could follow in the wake of young China a miraculous transformation could be brought about as regards removal of illiteracy. Unfortunately, all the precious time of vacation is wasted by our students in idle-talks and gossips, card-playing and an extra dose of sleep during midday. I do not mean that the fault lies entirely with our students. It is to be regretted that there have not sprung amongst us leaders of outstanding personality who could undertake to guide our students in the path beneficial to themselves and to the community. The very emotional side of the Bengali stands in the way of his taking up sustained work requiring life-long devotion to a cause. "The characteristic of heroism", as Emerson has it, "is its persistency. All men have wandering impulses, fits and starts of generosity. But when you have chosen your part, abide by it and do not weakly try to reconcile yourself with the world." The Bengali is lacking in patience; he is always after quick results—he is for reaping without sowing. Sensationalism appeals to him more than steady, silent work away from the public gaze. Ten thousand young men will be ready to enter jail after a fiery impassioned speech by a popular leader, but when it comes to real constructive work in a remote village there is little or no response. The silent life-long service, which may not produce any immediate palpable result, has no attraction for our youth because he has been fed too often on froth and foam, sound and fury, which signify nothing. Whatever he does he must do in the glare of the public and in the lime-light of vulgar applause. He is for the attainment of his end by "direct action" and quick methods; hence sustained work requiring life-long devotion and unflagging zeal does not appeal to him. His efforts are spasmodic; he can only work by fits and starts. His work, therefore, is productive of no permanent benefit. Hence his failure all

along the line. He should always remember the words of the poet:—

Prune thou thy words, thy thoughts control,  
That o'er thee swell and throng ;  
They will condense within thy soul,  
And change to purpose strong.  
But he who lets his feelings run,  
In soft luxurious flow,  
Shrinks when hard service must be done  
And faints at every woe.

Our brilliant graduates almost without exception hanker after service. It is because such service satisfies the mean objective "safety first". But an Indian Government servant, be he a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council or a *chaprasi* (a court messenger) is after all a miserable and may even be a despicable creature. He has to dance to the tune of his master; blunt or sell his conscience for a mess of pottage. He is at best a limb of the bureaucracy and must carry out the policy shaped at Whitehall. Like a gramophone he repeats his "Master's Voice". He learns that to look at things from the Indian point of view is anathema. In a dependency the interests of the rulers and the ruled are as the poles asunder. He realises at every step that he is an instrument through whose agency measures calculated to do harm to his country have to be hatched, carried out or enforced. He is daily brought under demoralising influences. The land-holder or the merchant who otherwise might have maintained an independent attitude is also drawn into the spider's parlour. Allurements are dangled before his eyes. As Terence MacSwiney says:

"The moral plague that eats up a people whose independence is lost is more calamitous than any physical rending of limb from limb. The body is a passing phase, the spirit is immortal; and the degradation of that immortal part of man is the great tragedy of life. Consider all the mean things and debasing tendencies that wither up a people in a state of slavery. There are the bribes of those in power to maintain their ascendancy, the barter of every principle by timeservers, the corruption of public life and the apathy of private life; the hard struggle

of those of high ideals, the conflict with all ignoble practices, the wearing down of patience, and in the end the quiet abandoning of the flag once bravely flourished; then the increased numbers of the apathetic, and the general gloom, depression and despair—everywhere a land of decaying. Viciousness, meanness, cowardice, intolerance, every bad thing arises like a weed in the night and blights the land where freedom is dead; and the aspect of that land and the soul of that people become spectacles of disgust, revolting and terrible, terrible for high things degraded and the great destinies imperilled. It would be less terrible if an earthquake split the land in two, and sank it into the ocean."

The Bengali youth is an odd blend of incongruities. The Chinese student is engaged during vacation in social work in the villages, peddles goods and thereby earns his livelihood for the time being, but our youngman, conscious of his so-called social status, fights shy of any kind of labour which smacks of loss of dignity. He cannot stand on his own legs; for a single day's meal he has to depend on his guardian or some kindly neighbour.

I have been watching the proceedings of some of the conferences of our youth movements. A leader with pungent political views is generally elected president. Our youngmen listen to his fiery speech with rounds of applause. Resolutions on abolition of untouchability and dowry on the occasion of marriage, uplifting of the masses, and what not, are unanimously passed and when they disperse they forget all about them.<sup>4</sup> It never occurs to them that mere paper resolutions can never bring about our salvation. It is all words and catch phrases. The college student would non-co-operate and cease attending lectures, all the same he has an eye on the percentage in his class-roll for he is hankering after his degree as also com-

<sup>4</sup> As if in mockery of the above resolutions, the very newspaper in which the account of the conference appears in glowing terms, inserts in its "matrimonial columns" such like advertisements taken at random.

"Wanted Non-Sandilya Barendra Brahmin fair-complexioned educated bride for double M.Sc., settled in life, young bachelor (Srotiriyai)."

"Wanted a Bangaj bride for a Ghosh M.B., proceeding England for M.R.C.S. degree. Respectable parentage having property, houses in district headquarter. Help to foreign studies needed."



petitive examinations and is keen for the I. C. S. and B. C. S. The very idea of independent means of livelihood is foreign or repugnant to his nature. His career ends in dismal failure like Hamlet in a mood of agony, vacillation and despair.

No atmosphere could be more demoralising than that in which our boys grow to maturity. They find society permeated through and through with fraud, hypocrisy and dishonesty. In most of the lower ranks of such public services, as the railways, police, or judiciary, or excise, persons who do not accept bribes are honourable exceptions. Food meant for poor patients in hospitals or helpless prisoners in jail is often diverted to satisfy private greed. It is not even uncommon to find highly paid officers being involved in such shady transactions. Instances of hypocrisy in every-day life are extremely common. Ice, soda water, or aerated beverages in general are as a rule prepared and served by "low-caste" people or Moslems. Our educated men have no hesitation in taking such drinks, but the moment a glass of water is offered by a member of the so-called "untouchable class" at a social function they are horrified. The cry is raised that the time-honoured caste-system is in danger. The college-bred youth surrenders at discretion. Restaurants are springing up in the Hindu quarters of Calcutta like mushrooms and it is well known that the dishes are often prepared by Moslems or *Magh* cooks. They are frequented and patronised by our young hopefuls; but when they go home to their native villages, they fight shy of such sacrilege for fear of offending the susceptibilities of their elders. The youth with his academic laurels, with his Mill, Spencer, Bernard Shaw<sup>5</sup> on his lips dare not marry beyond his prescribed rank in the social hierarchy; yet he has no hesitation in talking glibly of Bertrand Russell's "Social

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<sup>5</sup> Bernard Shaw out on a tour in the East recently refused to land in Bombay, when his ship lay off the harbour. When interviewed by a Press representative, he said that he knew all about the Indian intelligentsia who could quote seventeen volumes of Herbert Spencer from memory. Obviously it is his incisive way of saying that rationalism of the West dwells in the memory of Indian men and women and not in their action.

Reconstruction", "Syndicalism", or "Socialism". Our educated countrymen, or at least a good many of them, have had their credulity easily imposed on. Two rival advertisements are appearing in the nationalist papers conducted in English throughout India for more than a year in which the virtues of amulets and charms are extolled. The wearers thereof are assured of every blessing on earth!

Even our "educated" people are slaves of tradition and convention and dare not deviate an inch from the beaten track. Dr. R. P. Paranjpye, Vice-Chancellor, Lucknow University, in a recent lecture (Oct. 2, 1934) observed :

"It was curious to note that reason played a negligible factor in guiding the actions of a vast majority of people. In spite of their education they were as gullible as the most ignorant villagers and chose to be driven blindly in the fields of politics, religion and other matters by self-styled leaders who claimed to have derived inspirations from mysterious sources."

Ap[ro]pos of the present superstitious mentality of a large section of educated Indians, Dr. Paranjpye read two articles entitled "The Guru Craze" and "Modern Deification".

Referring to what he described as "The Guru Craze" Dr. Paranjpye said :

"To careful observers of the intellectual life of a nation it is no new thing to be told that there are ebbs and flows in the hold that several philosophies have upon the educated part of the community. Some forty years ago Mill was a name to conjure with and all educated people were followers of Mill, Spencer and others of the rationalistic school. After this exaggerated worship of Mill, or rather in consequence of it, has come the reaction, when it is the prevailing fashion to sneer at the exponent of a mere dry philosophy, and his followers. The cold light of reason, so runs the fashionable cant of the day, is not sufficient to satisfy the wants of the inner soul of man.

#### *Growth of Occultism.*

"I do not, however, propose to discuss the prevailing intellectual atmosphere of the West. I wish to refer only to a backwash of the same movement as seen in India, viz., the growing tendency towards occultism among the educated classes of India. The increasing following of such cults as Theosophy, Vedantism and what for want of a better word, we may call Vivekanandism, is due to the same intellectual

or 'quasi'-intellectual movement. But in these instances at any rate there is an avowed appeal to the intellect; but close followers of Indian thought have recently observed a far more vicious tendency among the educated people of Western India at least; I mean the absolute abdication of all reasoning faculty which consists in adopting a 'guru' in the religious sense of the word. A 'guru' is a person whose every word is a law to his disciple and whose command is to be obeyed and not argued with however absurd it may be."

What Dr. Paranjpye speaks of the educated people of Western India applies equally to whole of India.

Demoralising influences in the wider sphere of public and political life have in recent years become extremely powerful. The more communal a public man is in his outlook, the better are his chances for basking in the sunshine of Government favour. It is not uncommon to find one brother accepting a big position under Government, drawing princely emoluments and having had titles showered upon him, while the other courting poverty and jail, but all the same paving the way for the future emancipation of the country. The parallel of Man Singh *vs.* Rana Pratap, or that of Arminius *vs.* his brother may be quoted here:

"Arminius had collected his army on the other side of the river; and a scene occurred, which is powerfully told by Tacitus, and which is the subject of a beautiful poem by Præd. It has been already mentioned that the brother of Arminius, like himself, had been trained up, while young, to serve in the Roman armies; but, unlike Arminius, he not only refused to quit the Roman service for that of his country, but fought against his country with the legions of Germanicus. He had assumed the Roman name of Flavius, and had gained considerable distinction in the Roman service, in which he had lost an eye from a wound in battle. When the Roman outposts approached the river Weser, Arminius called out to them from the opposite bank, and expressed a wish to see his brother. Flavius stepped forward, and Arminius ordered his own followers to retire, and requested that the archers should be removed from the Roman bank of the river. This was done; and the brothers, who apparently had not seen each other for some years, began a conversation from the opposite sides of the stream, in which Arminius questioned his brother respecting the loss of his eye, and in what battle it had been lost, and what reward he had received for his wound. Flavius told him how the eye was destroyed, and mentioned the increased pay that he had on account of its loss, and showed the

collar and other military decorations that had been given him. Arminius mocked at these as badges of slavery; and then each began to try to win the other over; Flavius, boasting the power of Rome, and her generosity to the submissive; Arminius appealing to him in the name of their country's gods, of the mother that had borne them, and by the holy names of fatherland and freedom, not to prefer being the betrayer to being the champion of his country. They soon proceeded to mutual taunts and menaces, and Flavius called aloud for his horse and his arms, that he might dash across the river and attack his brother; nor would he have been checked from doing so, had not the Roman General, Stertinius, run up to him, and forcibly detained him. Arminius stood on the other bank, threatening the renegade, and defying him to battle.

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It makes us reflect on the desolate position of Arminius, with his wife and child captives in the enemy's hands, and with his brother a renegade in arms against him".—Creasy: *The Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World*.

The great Irish patriot further observes: "It is the duty of the rightful power to develop the best in its subjects, it is the practice of the usurping power to develop the basest. Our history affords many examples. When our rulers visit Ireland they bestow favours and titles on the supporters of their regime but it is always seen that the greatest favours and highest titles are not for the honest adherents of their power—but for him who has betrayed the national cause that he entered the public life to support. Observe, the men who might be respected are passed over for him who ought to be despised. In the corrupt politician there was surely a better nature. A free state would have encouraged and developed it. The usurping state titled him for the use of his baser instincts. Such allurements must mean demoralisation. We are none of us angels, and under the best of circumstances find it hard to do worthy things; when all the temptation is to do unworthy things we are demoralised."

In India, too, similar methods are being tried and with more deadly effect. No wonder that, brought up amidst such surroundings, our youngman naturally begins to have his

moral fibre weakened. In his every day life, he compromises his conscience ; he realises what he ought to do, but he has not the courage of his convictions and fails to translate his intentions into action. Oftentimes a kind of moral paralysis overtakes him.

In spite of these adverse circumstances he who wants to play the man must rise superior to them ; difficulties no doubt beset his path but like a weary pilgrim he should march towards his goal. It is the idler and the drone who, themselves unable to do anything, scoff at the attempts of those who do not see the lion in the path and who do not give way to despondency but heroically battle against the unpropitious lot that is theirs. He must burst through the limitations. Fortunately there are silver linings in the dark clouds. Many noble souls have in recent years given up bright prospects in their career, have courted poverty and obscurity, have retired to malaria-stricken villages so that they might work among the dumb masses and uplift them. A little leaven leaveneth the mass. It may take long before any tangible results are produced but the high ideal which they have held aloft before the youth of Bengal cannot fail to produce some beneficial effect in the midst of the encircling gloom.

#### V—REALISM *vs.* IDEALISM.

The miserable failure of the Bengali in business matters has already been the subject of my life-long study (Vol. I. p. 440) ; and the causes are to be sought for in the temperament of the people as also in the climate and fertility of the soil coupled with the system of permanent settlement of the land. The patriotic impulse—the enthusiasm of the Bengali—at times rises to white heat ; but it is of short duration. It flares up like the fire of straw for a moment and soon subsides. There is no sustained energy, no dogged perseverance and bull-dog tenacity in the Bengali. He wants his path clear of thorn as conformable to his indolent nature. He forgets that to achieve success it is necessary to begin low in the scale, to have patience and slowly work his way up. The Marwari and the

*Topiwallas*<sup>6</sup> do not disdain to walk into the remotest hamlets and transact business *direct* with the ryots, when it is necessary to do so, specially in jute. It is curious to note that the Zemindar or the Pattanidar or any other under-tenant in whose land jute is grown, does not like that his sons should be trained in such undignified work ; but all the same would spend a mint of money on his son's "education" in Calcutta with a view to qualify him for a Government job. Often the Zemindar or the successful lawyer or the Government servant or the well-to-do tradesman would send his son to eat dinners at the Inns-of-Court or enter a British engineering college. The son would return as a barrister or as a "qualified" engineer and there being no careers open in the overcrowded professions, would continue to be a burden on his parents. Some even return unsuccessful in winning any sort of diplomas.<sup>7</sup> It is simply heart-rending to think of the appalling waste of patrimony and energy in this way.

Sometimes the college-educated youth would think of entering business when he realises too late that he, or rather his guardian, made a miscalculation. He forgets that to be trained in business one has to begin early at thirteen or fifteen and be apprenticed to it in any capacity however humble and thus slowly learn the A B C of it. After receiving his schooling in the rough-and-tumble of business life, he should begin on a humble scale.

But all this is opposed to the inherent nature of the Bengali. He is highly emotional and impulsive. One of the results of the partition of Bengal agitation was the *Swadeshi Movement*. Fired by patriotic fervour the Bengali took a vow to eschew articles of foreign make as far as possible but as he never went through the probationary period, he failed miserably. The result was that the Parsis and the Gujratis of Bombay reaped a golden harvest chiefly in textiles. But the *Swadeshi* had its repercussion in Bombay in other ways.

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<sup>6</sup> Lit. wearers of hat, i.e. Europeans.

<sup>7</sup> Several such cases are known to me.

"By the summer of 1907, however, a new situation had been created in India. The 'Swadeshi' movement, which on its more praiseworthy side meant the cultivation of the doctrine that the resources and the industries of India ought to be developed by the Indians themselves, had reached its height. All India was talking 'Swadeshi', and was eager to invest in 'Swadeshi' enterprises. Mr. Dorabji and Mr. Padshah, who had spent weary months in the City of London without avail, after their return conceived, in conjunction with Mr. Bilimoria, the bold idea of appealing to the people of India for the capital needed. The decision was a risky one, and many predicted failure, but it was amply justified by the result. They issued a circular, which was practically an appeal to Indians.

"Mr. Axel Sahlin, in a lecture delivered to the Staffordshire Iron and Steel Institute in 1912, has described the instantaneous response, thus :

'From early morning till late at night the Tata Offices in Bombay were besieged by an eager crowd of native investors. Old and young, rich and poor, men and women, they came, offering their mites ; and, at the end of three weeks, the entire capital required for the construction requirements £1,630,000, was secured, every penny contributed by some 8,000 native Indians. And when, later, an issue of Debentures was decided upon to provide working capital, the entire issue £400,000 was subscribed for by one Indian magnate, the Maharajah Scindia of Gwalior.' "—F. R. Harris : *J. N. Tata*, p. 202.

My object in alluding to all this is to bring home to the Bengali that mere patriotic impulse or emotionalism will avail him nought. He should be prepared to go through the rough-and-tumble of life and even receive at times hard knocks in the shape of failures—for failures are the precursors of success.

#### VI—CULTURE AND MONEY MAKING.

I am often told that mere money-making instinct will lead the Bengali to become the Marwarl. I would first in reply to this charge quote from two eminent English writers :—

"The ordinary man's main business is to get means to

keep up the position and habits of a gentleman. . . . The secret of the prosaic man's success, such as it is, is the simplicity with which he pursues these ends: the secret of the artistic man's failure, such as that is, is the versatility with which he strays in all directions after secondary ideals. The artist is either a poet or a scallawag: as poet, he cannot see, as the prosaic man does, that chivalry is at bottom only romantic suicide: as scallawag, he cannot see that it does not pay to sponge and beg and lie and brag and neglect his person."—Bernard Shaw: *Man and Superman*.

"The history of the world shows us that men are not to be counted by their numbers, but by the fire and vigour of their passions; by their deep sense of injury; by their memory of past glory; by their eagerness for fresh fame; by their clear and steady resolution of ceasing to live, or of achieving a particular object, which, when it is once formed, strikes off a load of manacles and chains, and gives free space to all heavenly and heroic feelings. All great and extraordinary actions come from the heart. There are seasons in human affairs when qualities, fit enough to conduct the common business of life, are feeble and useless, and when men must trust to emotion for that safety which reason at such times can never give. These are the feelings which led the Ten Thousand over the Carduchian mountains; these are the feelings by which a handful of Greeks broke in pieces the power of Persia: they have, by turns, humbled Austria, reduced Spain; and in the fens of Dutch, and in the mountains of the Swiss, defended the happiness, and revenged the oppressions of man! God calls all the passions out in their keenness and vigour, for the present safety of mankind. Anger, and revenge, and the heroic mind, and a readiness to suffer;—all the secret strength, all the invisible array of the feelings;—all that nature has reserved for the great scenes of the world. For the usual hopes, and the common aids of man, are all gone. Kings have perished, armies are subdued, nations mouldered away! Nothing remains, under God, but



those passions which have often proved the best ministers of His vengeance, and the surest protectors of the world."

"This passage of Sydney's [Sydney Smith] expresses more than any other I could have chosen out of what I know of modern literature, the roots of everything I had to learn and teach during my own life; the earnestness with which I followed what was possible to me in science, and the passion with which I was beginning to recognize the nobleness of the arts and range of the powers of men."—Ruskin's *Autobiography*, vol. ii, pp. 246—48.

Emotion or sentiment is certainly a nation's precious asset. But it is always confined to a chosen few—to a *divine* few. An entire people cannot live on emotion, otherwise it will have to "sponge and beg and lie and brag". Cromwell and Hampden did miracles but the civil war had to depend for sinews of war on the wealthy London merchants. The Bengali graduate is now too glad to accept a typist's place on a monthly pay of Rs. 30 in a Marwari firm and even that falls to the lot of one out of a hundred. He now finds a solution of his troubles in taking leave of this world—he ends by committing suicide.

The Bengali forgets that the greatest nation in industry and commerce and navigation has produced side by side the greatest poets, scientists, men of letters, philosophers, artists and engineers. So there is nothing incompatible between success in life in the ordinary sense and indulging in emotion in the same people.

It is not the college educated youth alone but the Bengalis as a people, Hindus and Moslems, have failed in the battle of life. They are yet living in a happy-go-lucky sort of way and are thus unable to compete with the sturdy non-Bengalis, who are elbowing them out of every kind of trade, internal and external. It is necessary to bring about a psychological change in our people—a new orientation in the mode of thought and activity in our national life or our economic doom cannot be averted.

The utter helplessness of the Bengali in industry is evident from the number of sugar mills started in Bihar, U. P., etc. Since the high import duty on Java sugar (167 per cent.) some 92 new mills have sprung up, but not a single Bengali concern. Two big mills have been erected in the Murshidabad and Rajshahi districts by enterprising Marwari firms ; but the Bengali is nowhere. But as Bengal is the province which consumes the largest amount of white sugar, he will put Rs. 7-12 per cwt. into the pockets of Europeans (Begg Sutherland, Andrew Yule, etc.), Marwaris, Gujratis and the Punjabis. The total amount will come up to between Rs. 3 and 4 crores. His very helplessness is exploited by the non-Bengalis. And yet he thinks, he is the apostle of Swadeshi.

Take again banking. Here too the Bengali is nowhere ; what little progress has been made in this line is mainly on the Bombay side.

The savings of the well-to-do Bengalis since the days of John Company have either been invested in "Company's" (Government) paper or placed in the custody of European banks as fixed and current deposits ; the latter often carrying no interest at all or at the most one per cent. A small fraction of his savings also finds its way into the coffers of the smaller banks which are branches of the parent organisations at Calcutta, Bombay, Lahore, etc. The only Bengali venture in this direction started during the Swadeshi movement in 1905—1907 has recently ended in a lamentable and shocking collapse, from the moral effect of which Bengal is not likely to recover within the next quarter of a century. It will thus be evident that several crores of rupees are locked up in European or non-Bengali banks, the proceeds of which, invested in paying concerns, go to fill the pockets of Europeans and non-Bengalis.

The present system of education does not help us to find a solution of the acute problem. The fact is that the University authorities have been placed in a very awkward position. They hug to themselves the time-honoured custom or tradition that every boy must have the

University hall-mark. On the one hand they have to vernacularise—on the other hand they have in view the topheavy graduate and post-graduate classes.<sup>8</sup> So they must come to a compromise, which in this case results in total failure of the real aim of vernacularisation. As I have pointed out, early bifurcation alone could save the situation. Let only ten per cent. of our students, *i.e.*, those who aspire to be judges, magistrates, high-officials, lawyers, professors and researchers—take to English and the rest 90 per cent. should have a thorough-going instruction through the medium of vernacular from the age of 6 or 7 to 13 or 14 and then be apprenticed to trade, business, commerce, etc., as in Japan. I have been crying myself hoarse over the fact that there are already ten to twenty times, nay, in some spheres hundred times, more graduates and lawyers than there is room for. Another salient feature is clean forgotten. The Government officials, doctors, lawyers, etc., are parasites, *i.e.*, they live upon the wealth produced by the peasants. They do not create it. Unfortunately, with all these stern realities staring them in the face, the guardians fondly cherish the hope that their young hopefuls—one and all—would become judges, or high Government officials, successful lawyers, or doctors. Strange delusion! This year we have the largest number of 'matriculates' and consequently the largest number of entrants for the colleges. In Madras the state of things is equally deplorable. For, I read while correcting the proofs :

*Plight of Educated Unemployed—Madras Survey.*

"A civic survey of the educated unemployed youths is being vigorously carried on for some time past. The survey

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<sup>8</sup> For the B.A. : (English) Shakespeare's Plays (*e.g.*, Hamlet), Milton, Bacon, Carlyle, etc.; (Philosophy) Marvin, Stephen, James and so on. For the M.A. (English): old English literature—Beowulf, Alfred; Middle English and Elizabethan Literature—Chaucer, Geoffrey, Lyly, Marlowe, Ben Jonson. Then there are other periods of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. Only a few authors have been named. The list is a formidable one.

is almost complete and the report is expected to contain startling revelations about the conditions of the educated unemployed, particularly graduates. In the meanwhile, schemes are being drawn up to organise small industries and trade with small capital for bands of unemployed youths. To begin with a tailoring mart, a grocer's shop and a depot for hawking industrial products are to be run by educated youths. An appeal has been issued to the piece-goods and other merchants of the city to utilise the services of the educated unemployed youths for hawking and selling their so-called unsaleable condemned wares and goods."—*United Press*, Oct. 13, 1934.

Yet they go on manufacturing graduates *ad infinitum*.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### NEGLECT OF SANITATION AND IRRIGATION—A CHAPTER FROM THE WHITE MAN'S BURDEN.

Malarial fever is perhaps the most important of human diseases. Though it is not often directly fatal, its wide prevalence in almost all warm climates produces in the aggregate an enormous amount of sickness and mortality. In India alone it has been officially estimated to cause a mean annual death-rate of five per thousand; that is, to kill every year on the average 1,130,000 persons—a population equal to that of a great city. This is more than the mortality of plague at its height or of cholera and dysentery combined. The total amount of sickness due to it is incalculable, but may be put by a rough estimate at between a quarter and a half the total sickness in many tropical countries. Often all the children and most of the adults are infected by it. Unlike many epidemic diseases it is not transient but remains for ever in the areas which it has once invaded. It tends to abound most in the most fertile countries, and at the season most suitable for agriculture. Very malarious places cannot be prosperous: the wealthy shun them; those who remain are too sickly for hard work; and such localities often end by being deserted by all save a few miserable inhabitants. Malaria is the greatest enemy of the explorer, the missionary, the planter, the merchant, the farmer, the soldier, the administrator, the villager and the poor; and has, I believe, profoundly modified the world's history by tending to render the whole of the tropics comparatively unsuitable for the full development of civilisation. It is essentially a political disease—one which affects the welfare of whole countries; and the prevention of it should therefore be an important branch of public administration. For the State as for the individual, health is the first object of scientific government.—Ross: *The Prevention of Malaria* (1911).

#### I—MALARIA AND THE RAILWAYS.

A wave of epidemic fever of a virulent type swept over the Burdwan district (the "Burdwan Fever") between the months of July and August in 1860. It broke out again in 1861 and 1862 with redoubled vigour and crossed the Hugli and spread over the villages in and about Baraset. The places most affected were Triveni, Halisahar, Kanchrapara, Ula, etc.

The ravages were terrible. "A great number of homesteads had been deserted and there was scarcely a house in which several inmates had not been carried off". The Government of Bengal appointed a Commission in 1864 to inquire into the causes of this scourge consisting of British experts of the sacrosanct I. M. S. and a "native" gentleman of local experience. Fortunately, the choice fell upon the late Raja Digambar Mitra. The Commission laid much stress upon the notion then prevailing, namely the miasmatic effluvia, emanating from the decomposing vegetable matter as the chief contributory cause ; at the same time they did not fail to record : "Remembering that the direction of the natural drainage of the villages situated along the river banks is inland, we have no difficulty in believing that it is impeded by the Railway embankments on both sides."

It was, however, reserved for the lay member (Digambar Mitra) to append to the Report two separate notes over his own signature, which have now acquired historic importance. It is amply worth while quoting some extracts here :

"Choonakhally, Bhatpara, Cossimbazar, Kalkapore, Bamunghatta, and Furreshdanga were situated on a curve of the River Hooghly, until a straight cut was made some sixty years since forming the chord of the curve, thus changing the course of the river and throwing those places inland. This engineering operation was closely followed by the breaking out of an epidemic in all those places which, in its virulence and mortality, is unparalleled by any pestilential visitation in Bengal, saving perhaps that which depopulated Gour."

"In like manner the Eastern Bengal Railway and its feeders, when the same have crossed the water-courses of villages lying on the eastern bank of the river Hooghly, and of others more inland, but situated to the west of the line, have obstructed the drainage of those places ; the fall of the villages lying on the eastern bank of the Hooghly, as I have before observed, being towards the east, and consequently Chagda, Kanchrapara, Halisahar, and many others similarly situated have suffered."

"Both the East Indian and the Eastern Bengal Railways and their feeders have crossed the water-courses of villages and obstructed the drainage of these places."<sup>1</sup>

Digambar's theory has now been accepted as the main cause not only of the breaking out of malaria in new areas but also as aggravating the havoc of the floods.

The toll levied by malaria, kala-azar, tuberculosis and cholera is unusually heavy. In 1927 the total death from fever in Bengal amounted approximately to 800,000, out of which nearly half was claimed by malaria; kala-azar claimed 11,855 victims; during the last 5 years death from small-pox has been on the increase, the figure for 1928 being 59,000 in Bengal. While according to Mrs. Campbell Forrester, who has carefully studied the havoc caused by the 'white plague', "Bengal had a population of 4 crores and 65 lacs of which 8 lacs of people were dying of tuberculosis."

Not only the ravages of malaria but also the terrible calamity caused by the North Bengal flood would have been mitigated, if not altogether avoided, if the railway authorities had taken the precaution to provide sufficient outlets for the passage of water. But they were more concerned in cheapening the cost of laying down the railroads. Earthworks had been thrown across partially silted up river-beds leaving narrow culverts for the flow of water. An engineer with only an elementary knowledge of his subject would have suggested the construction of bridges in such places. But the authorities were more anxious to consult the interests of the foreign capitalists and were thus utterly regardless of future consequences. The less the expenditure the larger the dividend. The interests

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<sup>1</sup> Bholanath Chunder: *Life of Raja Digambar Mitra*, vol. i. pp. 197-200; *ibid.*, vol. ii. p. 63. It is scarcely necessary to remind the reader that the anopheles mosquito as the carrier of the malarial gerin had not as yet been suspected. Even so late as 1897 Ross writes: "The medical bigwigs there were still fast rooted in the opinion that malaria was due to marsh miasma".

of millions of inhabitants in those regions were ruthlessly sacrificed<sup>2</sup> (cf. Vol. I, p. 236 *et seq*).

Sir Henry Cotton describing the "heaviest flood ever known" at Chooadunga (1871) assigns as one of the contributory causes the obstruction of the natural drainage.

"The embankment of the Eastern Bengal Railway, which then provided altogether insufficient waterway, was breached by these floods in several places. For some time the level of the inundation stood much higher on one side of the line than on the other. At last the water, slowly rising, trickled over the embankment, and by a force almost imperceptible at first, but after two or three days with irresistible pressure, swept away the earthwork and in a rushing torrent scoured out wide channels, one of which made a breach of a quarter of a mile in length, and was measured to be eighty feet in depth. Railway communication was, of course, interrupted."—*Indian and Home Memories*, p. 89.

Dr. Bentley, Director of Public Health, Bengal, in his evidence before the Royal Agricultural Commission (Vol. IV, pp. 240—71) has naturally dwelt at length upon the miseries caused by the criminal and wilful neglect of irrigation. A few extracts will suffice. "The whole question of irrigation is dealt with at length in my recent report on malaria and agriculture. Meanwhile I may point out that the districts mentioned below are greatly in need of irrigation, and that many other districts also require it—(1) Burdwan; (2) Birbhum; (3) Bankura; (4) Midnapur; (5) Hooghly; (6) Howrah; (7) Nadia; (8) Murshidabad; (9) Jessore. With adequate irrigation facilities, Bengal could feed the whole of India. If the existing rice-fields of Bengal gave a yield per acre as high as those in Spain, they would suffice for this purpose. If they

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<sup>2</sup> Dr. Gopal Chandra Chatterjee, who has made the subject of malaria his own, sums up in a few lines the pith of the arguments adduced above:

"The changes in the deltaic distributories are due not to natural causes but to human interference without understanding the true nature of the problem."—*Modern Review*, July 1931, p. 73.



yielded as well as the rice-fields of Japan, they would feed 200 millions of people. 'Any country', says Sir William Willcocks, 'which possesses rivers and streams whose waters are in flood for six weeks per annum at a suitable season of the year, can betake itself to basin irrigation with more or less profit. The science of dams, weirs, and regulators has received such development during recent years that there can be no problem so difficult that it cannot be solved by experience and originality'.

"As a result, I have found again and again that severe outbreaks of malaria have been associated with the existence of economic stress in the affected community. On numerous occasions I have shown also that evidence can always be found of a serious decline of agriculture in rural areas in which the census has discovered a marked reduction of population."

Dr. Bentley further observes:

"The bad effect of embankments has been commented on in more recent times. For example, in 1893 the Magistrate of Murshidabad stated that the prevalence of fever was largely attributable to the embankments protecting that part of the country, 'the unhealthiest areas being always those best protected by embankments.' . . . 'The outbreaks of malaria in Nadia and in 24-Parganas followed upon the construction of the Eastern Bengal State Railway and as we have already seen the great epidemic of fever in the Burdwan Division followed upon the construction of embankments in that part of the country also. . . . There is considerable justification for the belief that the embanking of rivers and the construction of raised roads and railways across the surface of the country in the low-lying delta tracts of Bengal has almost invariably been followed by an increase of malaria in the areas within their sphere of influence.'—*The influence of embankments upon the malaria of the delta tracts in Bengal.*

In this connection, the following quotation from a paper read at the Paris International Congress of 1889 by the Chinese statesman, General Schangte-tong is not without special interest.

"I may add that without these gigantic irrigation works, the Chinese would never have carried to such a pitch of perfection one of their most important industries. I speak of pisciculture. Thanks to the abundance of water, the whole of my countrymen, instead of contenting themselves with covering with their fishing boats the seas, rivers and lakes of our country, have devoted themselves to the breeding of fish. The spawn is everywhere carefully collected: far from leaving it to take its chance, the peasant gives this source of wealth a safe shelter in some spot where a perennial supply of water can be assured. The irrigation reservoirs teem with fish. During winter, the rice fields are fallow; the water is led into them, and they are instantly full of carp. This industry allows us to make fish a considerable factor in the food of our people. The fish are either eaten fresh, or salted, and dried; they are despatched to all parts of the Empire and sold at a price which is remunerative, though it is exceedingly cheap."

## II—MALARIA IN ITALY AND ANGORA.

Professor Angelo Celli, an eminent Italian authority on malaria, has laid special stress on the fact that this scourge is "connected with the economic and political life of the people who inhabit the region, where it dominates".<sup>3</sup> One who travels by the E. B. Railway will notice that burrow pits with their stagnant pools on both the sides of the line serve as breeding grounds of the anopheles but no care is taken to fill them up or pour kerosine oil over them.

Celli is strongly of opinion that "among the causes of social predisposition must also be included, education. When this, on account of poverty, is wanting, all the most injurious prejudices, both regarding the sources and vehicles of the in-

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<sup>3</sup> In support of this statement I may add that a very large fertile tract in the sub-division of Nator (Rajshahi) has become a hot-bed of malaria and is regarded as a veritable death-trap and is lying uncultivated. The same applies to considerable portions in the districts of Nadia, Jessore and Burdwan.

fection, and as to the mode of preserving oneself from it arise and persist".—*Malaria*, p. 182.

The Italian expert wrote the above in 1901 ; but the Italy of 30 years ago is by no means the Italy under Mussolini. Mussolini became head of the Government of Italy only in 1922. Within the last ten years he has achieved miraculous results as far as the stamping out of malaria is concerned.<sup>4</sup>

Italy has at the present time forty million inhabitants and yet our author records 3588 victims of this terrible scourge with evident horror. What would he think of Bengal with a population of 48 million annually claiming 400,000 as victims of malaria alone?

Mustapha Kamal Pasha has been in power only since 1922 and yet in the course of the last few years he has achieved similar miracles in Angora.

"Where is that mosquito-infested marsh from which one never failed to catch a first-class attack of malaria? It has been drained away and cleared under the supervision of a group of specialists in tropical diseases, specially organised to stamp out malaria, and in its place stands the U. S. Embassy. All the geography of the place has been changed."—Grace Ellison : *Turkey To-day*, p. 53.

<sup>4</sup> "But as Mussolini, through the Minister of Public Works, has been engaged during these past four years in draining and rendering arable tens of thousands of acres of marsh-land, up till now the breeding-ground of mosquitoes and of malaria, the wheat acreage and the wheat crop have increased enormously".

"Mussolini, by draining and rendering wholesome these swamps and morasses, is securing another benefit for the people as important as the grain crop, for he is gradually ridding the country of malaria. Whilst I write he has just said in Parliament that this terrible scourge claimed, in 1925, as many as 3588 victims. Besides which it embitters the lives of thousands more and renders helpless and sad the tender years of untold numbers of children. But each year the statistics show that death and suffering from malaria are decreasing, and Mussolini hopes that one day the disease will be stamped out."—A. Robertson : *Mussolini*, pp. 155-56.

## III—THE EFFECTS OF MALARIA ON SOCIETY.

On becoming Governor of Bengal, Lord Ronaldshay enquired into the condition of things prevailing in Bengal. Let us quote his remarks on malaria—perhaps “the most widespread and most virulent of all the diseases which afflict the people of Bengal” :

“I frankly confess that I was shocked at the grim tragedy which my enquiries disclosed. Every year there occur in Bengal 350,000 to 400,000 deaths from this cause [malaria] alone. But a mere enumeration of the deaths gives but a faint idea of the ravages of the disease. It is probable that at least a hundred attacks of malaria occur for every death. This gives an idea of its results from an economic point of view. Its spectral finger may also be traced in the diminution of the birth-rate as well as in the increase of death-rate, with the result that in the worst malarial districts the population shows a serious decline. The state of affairs is summed up in the Bengal Census Report of 1911 in the following words: ‘Year by year fever is silently at work. Plague slays its thousands, fever its ten thousands. Not only does it diminish the population by death, but reduces the vitality of the survivors, saps their vigour and fecundity and either interrupts the even tenor or hinders the development of commerce and industry. A leading cause of poverty in a great part of Bengal is the prevalence of malaria. For a physical explanation of the Bengali’s lack of energy malaria would count high.’ ”

And how does malaria affect us socially and economically? Dr. Pais, the author of a recent report on malaria in Italy, remarks:—“The gravity of malaria infection considered as a social ailment should not be looked for in its diffusion and in the number of lives it takes from society. It tends to impress a character of regression on the population among whom it reaps its victims and causes them to fall from the grade of civilization they have attained. Compared to tuberculosis, malaria kills less frequently and less rapidly, but it inexorably destroys the more lively energies of men. It impoverishes the

blood, causes all the forces of man to droop and wither, takes away the desire for the possession of the earth and the joy in living. Malaria impresses not only physical marks but, above all, physical degeneration on the race it smites. Distrust towards works of a social character, diminished liking for work, restricted vision towards all the phenomena of life are special characteristics of those with chronic malaria and the peoples who have long suffered from the infection''.

#### IV—THE GREAT QUININE MYSTERY.

There is a cinchona plantation at Mungpoo (Darjeeling district), where quinine is manufactured at the Government factory. But strange to say the Indian public is supplied with Java quinine at a higher price (the difference being Rs. 4 to Rs. 5 per pound). Indian quinine is sold in bulk at Rs. 18 per pound.

*"It is an unexplained mystery why, in view of the needs of malaria-stricken provinces and with a large stock of Indian quinine in hand, the country should be importing Java quinine at higher price. It seems an even greater mystery why the Government of India should be negotiating with a Dutch company to sell its own quinine to the company and entrust that company with the distribution of the drug in this country.*

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*"Quinine is not entirely a commercial proposition in India. It has a public health aspect. From the meagre information available to the public the sale of Indian quinine in India, without the intervention of a foreign agency, would appear to be a sound proposition commercially and otherwise. It is due to the public that the Government should reassure it that no agreement will be made by which a powerful foreign company can establish a monopoly in this country and then raise the price of a most necessary drug. The whole question is at present wrapped in obscurity.*

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*"Three months ago our Simla correspondent reported that the Government had 300,000 lbs. of quinine representing Rs. 54 lakhs of frozen capital on its hands, yet India is still importing 120,000 lbs. of foreign quinine a year. If the Kina Bureau thinks it can profitably undertake the sale of the accumulated stocks, it should be possible for the Government to provide a selling agency of its own, more especially*

as it appears to be actually proposed that the Kina Bureau should not only buy Government of India quinine and sell it to provincial Governments at a profit, but should also sell it to the public through Government agencies such as the post offices and the railways. There is evidently money in quinine for somebody, but the peasant needs the drug and the Government should prevent the possibility of plunder."—*The Statesman*, Oct. 3, 1934.

It is thus evident that our benign government far from helping the malaria-stricken peasants actually compel them to buy the drug at a dear price.

#### V—TUBERCULOSIS IN BENGAL.

Dr. Bentley said that "tuberculosis, was one of the crying problems in Bengal to-day and specially in Calcutta and Howrah. There were in the last 20 years only three districts in which the average mortality had shown a definite increase, in Calcutta, 24-Parganas and in Howrah. The explanation of this increased mortality in these three areas was owing to the industrial development and organisation of the areas and the increase of tuberculosis went hand in hand with the organisation and industrialism".

There is evidence that tuberculosis is exceedingly widespread in Bengal not only in the towns but also in the rural areas. Certain investigations suggest that something approaching 10 per cent. of the total mortality in several districts is due to phthisis alone. There are grounds for believing also that this is by no means an excessive estimate. In the case of Calcutta about 8 per cent. of all deaths are ascribed to tuberculosis; but Sir Leonard Rogers, as a result of a careful examination of the records of postmortem examinations made in connection with the Calcutta Hospitals during the past 22 years, has shown that no less than 17 per cent. of the total deaths were due to tuberculous disease, and that in 25 per cent. of the cases examined signs of tuberculosis were present.

Regarding tuberculosis in Bengal Dr. Lankester states in his report: "Both from towns and village districts in the neighbourhood of Calcutta . . . . I obtained ample evidence

of the spread of consumption from the central city to parts around within a large area". Dr. Bentley said that he had for several years evidence that in certain rural areas a heavier ratio of mortality was occurring from phthisis than at present recorded in Calcutta.

In both Great Britain and America there has been a rapid and progressive decline in deaths from tuberculosis for many years past. In England and Wales they have declined by nearly two-thirds since 1847 and in America decline during the past 50 years is over sixty per cent. "I do not refer merely to the damaging figures of her vital statistics", says Sir Malcolm Hailey, "though these are very striking. If I am correct, the average expectation of life in England has increased from the figure of forty years which held the field in the years 1833 to 1854, to 55½ years in 1910 to 1920. The expectation of life in India is less than 24 years. In the years 1861-65 the death rate was 21½ per thousand in England; it is now about 12 per thousand. The death rate in India varies so greatly with the course of epidemics that it is difficult to speak of an average; but in the lowest years it is more than double that of England. Yet the greatest evil does not lie entirely in this terrible wastage of life; the causes which produce a high death rate result also in a low vitality which affects the whole life of the people, and the damage to the race is as much mental as physical. Much of this is no doubt due to inadequate means of subsistence".

"Poverty, underfeeding and struggle for existence under adverse conditions—these have been a few of the many potent reasons that have led to the increase of tuberculosis in Calcutta", said Dr. T. N. Mazumdar, Health Officer to the Calcutta Corporation, in the course of an interview to the *United Press* (Oct. 1934).

Continuing he said: "Of all the problems of sickness and disease with which this province is confronted, that of tuberculosis holds the second place with regard to incidence and death. In the city of Calcutta alone there are about thirty thousand people suffering from this fell disease and approximately three

thousand die every year. In the whole of Bengal, it is estimated, there are no less than one million victims of the white plague. For eight years since 1924, the death per thousand in the city had been on an average 2.5 rising however on occasions to 2.7. But since 1932 decrease in its ravages had been evident, the death-rate falling so low as 2.1 per thousand in the same year. That can only be explained by the fact that articles of food had become cheaper which was responsible for increased vitality of the people.

"Other causes of the disease are the 'purdah', ignorance and carelessness resulting in sputum, loaded with bacilli being expectorated all over the place. Among the sufferers seventy-five per cent. come from congested, dirty and blocked quarters of the city, five per cent. from village dwellers; two and a half per cent. caused by hereditary infection and the rest imported from outside. The attacks of consumption are found in most cases among people taking beef, especially the poorer classes of Indian Christians and Mahomedans. Death rate amongst the Mahomedans and the Hindus are 2.9 and 2.3 per thousand respectively. The highest mortality is to be found among the Indian Christians, *i.e.*, 3.3 per thousand.

"The saddest feature of the whole thing", pointed out the Health Officer, "is the very high mortality amongst young females between ages of fifteen and thirty. Between the ages of ten and fifteen years for every boy that dies of tuberculosis, three girls die. Between the ages of fifteen and twenty years, for each boy dying of tuberculosis two girls die. Between the ages of twenty and thirty years for each young man who dies of tuberculosis three women die. This is really an appalling state of affairs. The most important factor in the ætiology of tuberculosis amongst girls and young women is early marriage which subjects immature women to the strain of repeated motherhood and prolonged periods of lactation. The seriousness of this is apparent when one realises that they are the mothers of the future generation and although the disease is not hereditary, yet a weak and diseased mother will bear a



weak child, one which will easily fall a prey to the infection to which it is exposed from its very birth”.

The facts and figures given by Sir George Newman show the ‘amazing transformation’ in the health of the British people which has taken place in the past 100 years. In India also there has been ‘amazing’ transformation in the health of the people. But the transformation is such as to bring tears to the eyes of a man who has lived to be fifty or sixty and who remembers still the smiling villages which had not yet proved a prey to the epidemics of cholera due to scarcity of drinking water, or which had not yet felt the effects of the scourge of malaria.

#### VI—DEATH RATE IN INDIA.

“According to the census of 1921, about one-fifth of the children in British India die before the age of one year. Out of every 100 infants born alive, 19.4 die in the first year of their life in India as compared with 7.7 in England and Wales, 8.8 in France, and 10.8 in Germany. It has been estimated that over 2 million children die every year in India in their infancy in addition to a large number of still-born. The number of children who die before reaching youth is considerable. Ten million children die between the ages of 10 and 15. In fact, scarcely 50 per cent. of the children born ever reach even a youthful age. Says the All-India Conference of Medical Research Workers, ‘the percentage of infants born in India who reach a wage-earning age is about 50’. In 1921 the death-rate in India was 3.06 per cent. as compared with 1.21 per cent. in England and Wales, 1.48 per cent in Germany, and 1.77 per cent in France. In other words, as compared with England and Wales, France and Germany, the death-rate is about twice as great and the average length of life is only one half about as much in India.”

One potent reason is malnutrition, as the infants between age 0—5 and 5—10 get a very insufficient quantity of mother’s or cow’s milk ; in short, they are fed on thin gruel of boiled rice, which neither contains nitrogenous (*i.e.* muscle-forming)

stuff nor calcium (*i.e.* bone-forming) element. No wonder that the Census Report for 1931 points out that the Muslim population is to the Hindu as 55 to 45 (approx.) ; but if babies be left out of consideration, *i.e.* if adult population be taken into account, the ratio would be 51 to 48. In other words, the mortality of the babies among the Muslims is much more than among the Hindus, though the latter is appalling in all conscience. This has reference to Bengal. Side by side may be read :

“ ‘Drink milk and become a Cabinet Minister’ was the gist of an address delivered by Mr. Walter Elliot, Minister of Agriculture, inaugurating at Kensington Boys’ School a national milk scheme which will provide all children with one-third of a pint of milk daily for  $\frac{3}{4}$ d.

“The Board of Education and the Milk Marketing Board have combined to provide £1,000,000 to feed children and so to dispose of over 100,000,000 gallons of milk which otherwise would become surplus stock.”—*Reuter*, Oct. 1, 1934.

The gloomy picture depicted above is matched by the one equally doleful, recently (Sept. 1933) broadcasted by Major-General Sir John Megaw, I.M.S. It is applicable to the whole of India.

“The data of the disease incidence is not claimed to be accurate. Tuberculosis is evidently very widespread throughout the villages of India but is specially serious in Bengal, Madras, the Punjab and Bihar and Orissa . . . . The data collected touch a variety of diseases and rural conditions of living. The figures regarding physical condition of villagers, though impressionistic, disclose that taking India as a whole 39 per cent. of the people are regarded as well-nourished, 41 per cent. poorly nourished and 20 per cent. very badly nourished.”

“Commenting on the ratio of the increased population and food supply, Sir John concludes that (1) Indian population is very poorly nourished; (2) average span of life is less than half of what it might be; (3) periods of famine or scarcity of food occur in every village out of every five; (4) cholera, plague and small-pox epidemics are commonplace occurrences; (5) in spite of high death rate population is increasing more rapidly than output of food and other commodities. Sir John emphasises the need for immediate and energetic measures for averting

the disaster, but he does not consider them as sufficient unless they are accompanied by equally energetic measures for the education of the masses in the principles of life planning . . . . He considers the increase in the population of India as alarming and fears that if the entire produce of the soil is needed to provide for the urgent needs of the cultivators, nothing will be left for the payment of rents or revenue, nothing to exchange for other commodities or even for the purchase of railway tickets, and the whole structure of India must inevitably be rudely shaken if not completely destroyed."

#### VII—GOVERNMENT AND SANITATION.

Every civilized country has the welfare of the people as its primary object and its rulers earmark a decent amount in the budget for sanitary purposes and the removal of illiteracy. Unfortunately, in India and especially in Bengal these two nation-building departments are starved, with what dire consequences it is needless to repeat. The late lamented G. K. Gokhale, than whom a better informed statesman India has not produced, thus laments in his budget speech of 1908 :

"Hitherto we had to be contented with an annual average of 3½ lakhs a year for the whole country, and contrasted with it the Hon'ble Member's 30 lakhs a year is almost a liberal provision ! It may be noted that during these same five years, while the Government contributed a mere pittance of 17½ lakhs towards the sanitation of our towns, which are being decimated by annual visitations of the plague, His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief was able to obtain for military charges a sum of about 27 crores above the level of the military expenditure of 1901-1902 ; and nearly 60 crores were spent as capital outlay on railways, of which one-third, or over 19 crores, was found out of current revenues. My Lord, this treatment of sanitation, as though the Government had no responsibility in regard to it, has hitherto been one of the most melancholy features of the present scheme of financial decentralisation, under which sanitation has been made over to local bodies as their concern, though they have admittedly no resources for undertaking large projects of improvement. The analogy of England is often quoted to justify this arrangement, though

on the same analogy our railway construction should have been left to private enterprise, but it is not. My Lord, our mortality statistics are ghastly reading. The officially recorded death-rate has steadily increased during the last 20 years from 28 per thousand to over 36 per thousand !”

It is rather a curious fact that Gokhale almost reiterates what *The Statesman* of Calcutta had said more than a quarter of a century earlier (Sept. 8, 1883).

“There is a wastefulness in the management of the Indian finances that is simply amazing. The Finance Department thinks nothing of holding Cash Balances of 16, 17, or even 20 crores of rupees. With telegraphs and railways all over India, a Cash Balance of 8 or 9 crores would, we are satisfied, be ample for all wants and all emergencies that are conceivable. But the idea of saving 20 or 30 lakhs a year in interest, by reducing the balances to reasonable limits is, of course, one of those peddling economies that heroic men think nothing of. At this moment, many local projects of importance are obliged to be postponed, we are informed, because of the scarcity of money in Calcutta. We stand in the midst of opportunities of all kinds, if the Government of the country had but the insight to discern them. Think for a moment what 2 crores of rupees lent to a great Metropolitan Board of Works would do for Calcutta and its suburbs. And the 2 crores will lie tarnishing there in the Treasury for 20 years on end, while, fever, cholera, dysentery and consumption play havoc amongst the population.”

It is, moreover, significant that even half-a-century ago “fever, cholera, dysentery and consumption were playing havoc”.

Two years later Gokhale returns to his charge but to no purpose :

“My real object is to secure the surplus of the year for expenditure in the promotion of sanitation throughout the country. What usually happens under the procedure adopted in connection with a surplus is this. The surplus forms part of the cash balances, and out of the cash balances a certain

amount is devoted to capital expenditure, whenever this is practicable, and thus the surplus ultimately finds its way into capital expenditure.

"Starting with the year 1898-1899, we find that we have had, during the ten years, ten consecutive surpluses amounting to 25 millions sterling or 37½ crores. And the bulk of them have, under this system of accounts, gone first to railway construction and from there to the reduction of our unproductive debt. Now, railway construction is a most desirable object, and so is also the reduction of the unproductive debt. Ordinarily, there would be nothing to be said against it, but at present, when there are objects, far more pressing and far more important, which require money, I do not think the Government is justified in devoting such a large sum out of surplus revenues in the way they have done. If this sum of £25 millions sterling, or 37½ crores of rupees, or at any rate the bulk of it, had been devoted to sanitary projects throughout the country, what a difference it would have made in every direction! I do not think I need say much about the needs of sanitation; the ravages of plague, malaria and other diseases in all directions and a death-rate already high and yet steadily rising—for 1907-08 it was 37 per thousand as against 35 per thousand in the three previous years—all that show that one of the greatest needs of the country to-day is improved sanitation.

"What I propose is this. Whenever a surplus is realised, instead of its being devoted to railway construction or some such object, it should be placed automatically at the disposal of Local Governments. A surplus is so much excess revenue taken from the people by the Government over and above its requirements."—*Budget Speech*, 1910.

A few years ago the late Mr. Moti Lal Ghose described a typical village during the days of his childhood :

"Have you, my young friends, any idea of what Bengal was 60 or 70 years ago? There were then very few towns and Municipalities in the Province. The pick of the nation lived in rural areas.

"The people had abundance of food, and had good appetite. There was scarcely a family, however poor, who had not one or more milch

cows. Rivers, channels, khals, tanks and ponds abounded in fish. Fruits were plentiful and so were fresh vegetables. Rice used to sell at an incredibly low price and all kinds of cereals were also very cheap.

"Villages in those days thus teemed with healthy, happy and robust people who spent their days in manly sport; in wrestling and playing lathis and swords; in swimming and climbing up tall trees; in riding and running.

"In short, the people could in those days nourish their bodies properly with wholesome food and pure drinking water; they could keep their villages dry by natural drainage; they had not to struggle hard for their bread; they had enough of cattle and unsilted-up waterways to furnish them with such nourishing food as milk and fish. They had also several other advantages which we do not possess now, with the result that they were able to enjoy an idyllic life six or seven decades ago, which has passed beyond our wildest dreams to-day."

The Indians have become physically weak and this is primarily due to poverty and want of food. Sir John Woodroffe rightly says :

"The first fact we notice is the weakness of the body. This is due to the great poverty of the mass of the Indian people."

Mr. A. G. Gardiner presents us with another picture :

"Whatever differences of opinion there may be as to the conditions of life to-day compared with those in the past, there is one respect in which the present has the verdict beyond any possibility of challenge. If life is a good thing—and, with all its ills, no normal person doubts that it is a good thing—we have it more abundantly than any generation that has preceded us since human life began on this planet.

#### *Middle-aged at Forty.*

"I speak of course of the quantity of life. I believe the same is true of the quality ; but that is perhaps arguable and I do not propose to argue it here.

"But about the quantity of life there can be no argument. Even as recently as the eighteenth century men were middle-aged at forty, old men at fifty, and if they were rich, died of gout and port wine, or, if they were poor, of starvation and misery before they were sixty.

"In the last century we have added twenty years to the average life. Fifteen of those years have been put on during the last fifty years and the pace in the last ten years has been more rapid than ever before.

"Take one or two facts from the official statistics. You will find them in 'Whitaker' or any book of reference. If, being a man, you had been born in 1871 your expectation of life would have been forty years ; if you were born in 1921 your expectation is fifty-five years.

"The case of the woman is even more remarkable for at all stages of life women have a better prospect of living than men. A female child born in 1871 had a prospect of forty-eight years' run on earth ; a female child born in 1921 has a prospect of over fifty-nine years.

"And this is not all. It is not merely that we live longer than our forebears but that we are more free from ailments than they were. They died prematurely from disease. We live the normal span because in the mass, we are more free from disease.

### *Maternity Lead.*

"The main cause of this striking prolongation of the average life is, of course, that we have stopped 'the massacre of the innocents'. Since 1907 the infantile mortality of the country has been halved.

"I can remember that in the nineties of last century towns like Burnley and Preston, and London boroughs like Shoreditch and Bermondsey, had an infantile mortality of 200 and over per 1000. This is, one in every five children born was born only to die. To-day the infantile death-rate of the country is sixty. With the exception of Norway we lead all Europe in the preservation of infant life.

"That is a magnificent achievement, due to better conditions, better sanitation, the establishment of maternity centres and maternity hospitals and the greater attention to pre-natal condition and child welfare. And it is not only the children who are saved. It is the mothers, too. The decline in the

deaths at child-birth is as remarkable as any feature of this resounding victory over death.

"Do not tell me that the world does not get better. It does in a hundred ways. This is one of them.

"But it is not only the children who are saved. The adult life is lengthened too, and this brings me to that conquest of disease which is the greatest triumph of modern civilization. I have before me the annual mortality statistics since 1871 for England and Wales. It reads like the record of a great battle in which the forces of death and disease are being routed with gathering momentum.

"Let me give a few of the facts it discloses. That dreaded enemy of the human race, tuberculosis, is in full flight. In 1871 of every million people who died, 2,884 died from tuberculosis in one of its forms. In 1930 the toll of tuberculosis had fallen to 872 per million deaths."

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## CHAPTER VIII.

### HAVOC CAUSED BY FLOODS.

Some of the causes of the disastrous floods were discussed in connection with flood in North Bengal (Vol. I., p. 238). I pointed out how these were mainly due to the policy of the government in allowing embankments for railway lines to be raised in utter disregard for the considerations of natural waterways. Even sufficient openings are not kept to allow for the natural flow of water. The government want to establish the straightest lines of communication, at minimum cost. Leaving of gaps in railway embankments and spanning them by steel culverts and bridges involve great costs and therefore they are avoided or shortened beyond proper limit. In consequence of this, water stagnates leading to conversion of healthy districts into malarial bogs and gives rise to devastating floods which would otherwise have been prevented. The sufferings of the people know no bounds. But they have no remedy against this legalised oppression of the government.

#### I.—FLOODS AND THEIR CAUSES.

The present year is *annus mirabilis* as regards floods with their attendant miseries. We have floods on the north, on the south, on the east and on the west of this vast peninsula ; on the top of it happens the greatest catastrophe known in modern India—the great earthquake of Northern Behar.

The Orissa and the Midnapore floods, however, take the precedence over other floods of the year on account of the magnitude of their havoc and devastations. In North Bengal it was the shortsighted policy of the government with regard to the railway embankments that was responsible for the disasters.

The floods of this year in Orissa and Midnapore and water-logging in the suburban area of Calcutta, illustrate the disastrous

results of the government policy with regard to canal embankments. The root cause is the same, namely, obstruction to natural passages of water on account of embankments raised for setting up cheap lines of communication. Canals are sketched out on maps in straight lines. No consideration is given to the drainage of the surrounding lands. Some sluice-gates are kept for draining flood water but they are either inadequate or inoperative and mostly the canal leads and embankments are designed in such a way that the sluice-gates are mere eye-wash, for they cannot receive the drainage from the surrounding lands—they are not designed to do so.

## II—WATER-LOGGING OF CALCUTTA SUBURBS.

Take for example the case of water-logging of the Calcutta suburbs. Within almost earshot of north Calcutta, 50 to 60 villages under the police outposts of Dum Dum, Bhangor and Rajerhat, occupying 80 to 85 sq. miles have been submerged. Some sixty thousand helpless people, the majority of whom are Moslems, have been reduced to destitution—their thatched hovels are standing on islets and the cattle perishing for want of fodder; some of the inhabitants are living on improvised *machans* (raised bamboo platforms); their crops have rotted away. For the last 12 or 13 years water-logging of this description, though not so disastrous, has been almost an annual occurrence. Before 1910, there were 7 or 8 outlets for the escape for water to run off; but in that fateful year a canal was excavated by the Cess Department for navigation purposes; it ran straight across many of these drainage channels and in order to keep a supply of water at a constant level in the canal, the mouths of these drainage channels were closed up. The canal connects salt water tidal rivers running through the Sunderbans at Kulti at one end with the river Ganges near Cossipur (Calcutta) on the other end. Ganges water besides being excellent for drinking contains fertilizing mud during the rains. If it could be kept filled up with Ganges water then this canal which passes through a salt water area, could be a blessing to the numerous

villages on either side, which suffer severely for want of drinking water. In fact there are villages from where people walk miles to get water from particular tanks in favoured spots in the vast salt water area. Then again, during flood tide of the rains this canal could have been designed to throw silt-bearing Ganges water on the surrounding lands and thereby fertilize the soil. The Government could have levied a cess for allowing this canal to be used as an irrigation canal which the locality really needed. But the consideration before the government was not one of irrigation. The establishment of a cheap and straight line of communication was the objective. If, therefore, when only water has to be filled in the canal, why not fill it with clear salt water? That water will never deposit silt and there will be no expense for redredging. The canal therefore tantalises the people of the neighbourhood. It is connected with the Ganges but is filled to the brim with salt water. But the greater part of the tragedy yet remains to be told. As irrigation was not the objective, therefore, drainage was also lost sight of. In order to cheapen the cost of construction the bed of the canal was excavated shallow. It has been made so shallow that boats cannot pass if the level of canal water is kept at the level of the surrounding lands. The water level of the canal was artificially raised by using the embankment as a part of the trough of the canal. The canal therefore shuts off all possibility of receiving normal drainage of the lands. On the contrary, if the embankment leaks then cultivable fields along the canal get filled with salt water ruining the standing crop and offering little prospect of crop in the next season. From 1910 this canal has converted large areas of cultivated lands into water-logged areas. In some years due to natural causes the accumulation of water becomes excessive and prevents cultivation altogether.

Some villagers took up one method of protesting against government action. They refused to pay Union Board taxes, they refused formation of Union Board even, which is set up in villages for administrative facility. Their property were being seized by process of certification and auctioned year

after year. At last the Government wanted to soothe them. When the villagers wanted the government to undo the mischief caused by the canal, the government remained adamant. This year the complete destruction of crop due to water-logging and prospect of future failure of crop due to ingress of salt water drew some amount of public attention. On the 9th August, 1933, the Hon'ble Member in charge of Irrigation and Cess Department visited this afflicted area and assured the doomed sufferers that he would see that the lock-gates were opened to let off the water. On the 13th of August and again on the 27th, 14 members of the Legislative Council accompanied by the authorities in charge of the Cess Department also visited the place in response to the bitter cries of the victims. But alas! nothing came of it. We learn that the experts are of opinion that the navigable canal with the lock-gates will have to be sacrificed, if such a course be adopted and the Hon'ble Member, who, of course, comfortably draws his Rs. 64,000 a year, is helpless and assumes an attitude of non-possumus. Here at any rate this disaster is not due to an "Act of God", but to criminal human folly and the callous indifference of our *paternal* Government to the agonies of the flood-stricken, which has become almost proverbial.

### III—FLOODS IN MIDNAPORE AND ORISSA.

This is in line also with what happened in Midnapore. An experienced worker in the previous floods thus describes the causes which have aggravated the damage caused by the floods in Tamluk and Contai (Midnapore).

"Firstly, on the sea-coast abutting upon the above subdivisions, a massive embankment has been raised to protect the land against the inroads of the sea ; but a sufficient number of sluice-gates has not been provided.

"Secondly, in the pre-railway days, in order to facilitate communication between Calcutta and Puri (Temple of Jagannath), a canal was cut (Hijli Tidal Canal—1868-73 and Orissa Coast Canal 1880-86). This canal runs parallel to the sea-coast in many portions of Tamluk and Contai and is pro-

tected by high embankments on both the sides. During the excavations of the canal, many outlets for the passage of water, which ran athwart the natural drainage, were filled up.

“Thirdly, since the opening of the Railway, the river traffic has been diverted, with the result that the canal as also the sluice-gates were relegated to neglect and fell rapidly out of repair thus preventing escape of the accumulated rains collected in the basins.”

A correspondent who is evidently well-informed, lays stress upon the fact that before 1861, there were, no doubt, floods, but with this difference that the water sought its own level and found its way into the adjoining rivers and finally into the sea. Another source of mischief lies in the fact that the government, for the protection of the *Khas Mahals*, as also the Zemindars have raised many local bunds to save their own crops. It will thus be seen that the folly, wanton neglect, and selfishness of the government and the local landlords have conspired to bring about these disasters. Four hundred sq. miles have been submerged and the loss involved in the total ruin of the standing crop and the mud walled houses, has been estimated at Rs. 75 lakhs. This, of course, does not take into account the miseries caused to the people and the cattle. Our paternal government which is directly responsible for the calamity eased its conscience by granting an agricultural loan of Rs. 25,000,<sup>1</sup> almost a drop in the bucket.

Midnapore is adjacent to Orissa and the offending canals that pass through Midnapore reach also Orissa which has been rendered a land of perpetual flood and water-logging—thanks to government policy of throwing up embankments.

In Orissa the evils of a short-sighted government policy of irrigation has assumed vast magnitude. Magnificent rivers passing through this land have been protected or killed with embankments and dams. The Mahanadi and the Katjuri rivers have been played with. Dams have been thrown across

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<sup>1</sup> This Tuccavi loan is of a pernicious character. As soon as the next year's crop is harvested the payment is exacted by certification.

to store up the water for serving as heads of irrigation canals. They still do supply irrigation water but how will mere water fertilize the soil which hunger for the muddy water of annual healthful inundation? Again, the town of Cuttack is now in a trap, for the beds of both the rivers have been raised up higher than the ground level of the town. The river is kept in its course by embankments. The artificially raised up beds sometimes break, as happened this year and the torrential water washes away every thing before it. Even where the government wanted to help the people, its shortsightedness and inexperience in handling with the rivers of India have brought on incalculable woe to the people.

The recent devastating flood in Assam is due, no doubt, to an "Act of God", but the damage caused by it would have been far lessened if a sufficient number of passages as outlets for water had been provided. Here again, the criminal neglect of the government is discernible. Let a correspondent who evidently speaks with local knowledge describe the gloomy situation.

"The harrowing tales of disaster wrought by the flood in Nowgong have invited the notice of all the people of India.

"From this one can easily imagine the intensity of the flood and the magnitude of disaster wrought by flood and the relief necessary to alleviate the distress of the people.

"The people inhabiting the South Valley of the Kapili river have been the worst sufferers for the last 15 years and during this period not less than 3 times the people fell under the grip of flood. Of these the recent flood is the most dreadful and unprecedented in the history of Assam.

"The flood here has been an unusual phenomenon which no human brain could have prevented. But had there been sufficient number of railway and other culverts for such an emergency to make the passage of the water to the north easy, the havoc wrought by the flood would have been much less. Even now the water level on the south side of the railway line is higher by two feet than on the north and the damage caused on the same level of ground on southern side of the railway line is much more extensive than on the north. The same thing was experienced in the 1929 Flood."—K. Hazarika, *The A. B. Patrika*, Aug. 26, 1934.

## IV—MAN-MADE MALARIA IN INDIA.

The All-India Conference of Medical Research Workers resumed its deliberation on Friday morning (Nov. 30, 1934). The report of the Malaria Committee was first considered.

"The Sind Malaria Inquiry in connection with the Sukkur Barrage next came up for consideration. This enquiry has continuously studied the conditions before, during and after the construction of the barrage. A resolution to the following effect was passed: 'That this Conference regrets the rise in malaria that has occurred as the result of the Sind Irrigation Project, and that the definite warnings of the Malaria Survey of India in this respect have apparently gone unheeded. In future in all the provinces of India, before any irrigation or major engineering projects are undertaken, there should be greater and compulsory co-operation between the Irrigation or other departments concerned and the Public Health Departments.' The fact that the subsoil water-level has risen in many areas around the project, that villages have had to be evacuated in consequence, and that malaria is steadily on the increase in this area is due to the neglect by the engineers of the possibilities of a renewal of malaria in the area concerned. In brief, malaria in Sind is a very good example of man-made malaria in India."

Thus the Sukkur Barrage Scheme carried out at an enormous expenditure, and which was announced in London a short while ago as a triumph of British rule has proved to be a veritable curse.

## V—THE PROBLEM OF RIVERS IN BENGAL.

The following are taken from *The Problem of Rivers in Bengal* by Mr. A. Hussain.

"All sorts of sanitary evils, economic ills, poverty and death that have been slowly leading her (Bengal) to decline and decay, day by day, are largely due to the deterioration of her rivers.

"I think that the true remedy of all these ills lies in the resuscitation and perpetual conservation of the rivers of the province.

"Rivers were the only means of communication all over Bengal from the Sunderbans to Jalpaiguri and from Satgaon to Chatgaon. Inter-district trade was carried on chiefly by means

of boats of large size, their capacity varying from 100 maunds to over 1000 maunds. Excepting the main channels of the Ganges and the Brahmaputra, there were 'rivers of first class size' such as the Karatoya, the old Brahmaputra in Bogra and Rangpur, the Atrai, the old course of the Tista in Rajshahi that ordinarily admitted 'boats of 1000 maunds burthen'. In olden times the whole trade of Bengal districts went by rivers. One could travel by a boat throughout the province. Commodities of one district were carried by boats to another district for exchange. Large river marts sprang up on the banks of the rivers. . . . The Karatoya was so large and deep that it used to drain all waters of Rangpur and the neighbouring districts without causing floods. The North Bengal was therefore less subject to occasional floods than now. . . . The Karatoya soon silted up and waters were diverted in all directions causing floods here and there. . . . The great export trade was effected from the marts on the Karatoya and the Nagar and the Jamuna. Boats from Jessore, Bakarganj, and Calcutta used to go up these rivers into interior river ports. When Hunter wrote he also found river traffic in all parts of Bengal as active as Major Rennell reported. The Nadiya Rivers were the distributing channels and the Atrai-Karatoya-Tista were collecting streams. The river traffic was also a source of income to the Zeminders and the government. The mooring-dues were fixed and collected regularly and traders never grudged such taxes. Every district of Bengal was engaged in export and import trade. The Collector reported that in Rajshahi nearly half the people lived by river trading. The commodities dealt were generally cotton, silk, salt, rice, jute, indigo, cloth, sugar, molasses, long pepper, pulses, oils and many other that satisfied not only the needs of Bengal but those of many other countries. Every district had a balance of trade. The Collector of Jessore reported in 1794: 'Exports greatly exceed the imports in value and the balance of trade is in favour of the district'. The Collector of Rajshahi reported about hundred years after in 1870: "The local manufactures as well as the crops are in excess of the local demand, and are



largely exported to neighbouring districts. The exports are considerably in excess of the imports and an accumulation of coin is going on in the district, in consequence of the balance of trade being in its favour'.

"It is to be noted here that fisheries of Bengal were much more valuable than now. In 1870 the Collector of Rajshahi estimated the value of the fisheries of the district to be about Rs. 2 lakhs or £20,000 annually. In the same year the Collector of Bogra also gave elaborate figures from which he concluded that the annual income of the professional fishing classes was about £30,000. . . . Fisheries of the Nadiya and Jessore rivers were also very important. But in large part of Jessore and some part of Nadiya now, fisheries have considerably decayed and the inhabitants can hardly get sufficient fish for their own consumption.

"There were excellent pasture lands and jungles on the banks of the rivers. They afforded good opportunity for rearing cattle. Deara-Char in Khulna, Goalabatan on the Madhumati, Madukhali on the Kapotakshi, older sandy banks or *chars* of the Brahmaputra in Bogra still provide extensive pasture grounds. But with the increase of grain prices and disappearance of supplementary local industries, the pasture lands are gradually being encroached upon by agriculture and consequently cattle-raising as an occupation of late, has considerably decayed. . . . In a word, with the gradual disappearance of rivers, various sources of income in Bengal are also being closed.

"Pasturage is brought under the plough and consequently milk has now been an article of luxury for the few.

#### VI—RAILWAY AND THE DETERIORATION OF RIVERS.

"Besides, the railroads have played an enormous part in choking up the rivers and obstructing the rapid streams. The Khulna branch of the Eastern Bengal Railway has crossed various rivers and channels flowing north to south. They have been bridged over. The pillars have obstructed the streams. Of these rivers, the Jamuna of Dinabandhu Mitra, the Ichhamati,

the tortuous Betna, the 'immortalised' Kapotaksha and the Mukteswari, which once used to carry to the sea the waters of the Ganges in addition to the accumulation from local rainfall, have been seriously affected to the detriment of navigation, nay life and property of thousands of people on their banks.

"Railways are undoubtedly a source of blessings to Bengal but at the cost of a natural source of blessings, *viz.* rivers. In America, France, Germany and even in England, Railways only supplement waterways. In those countries the State is spending freely on the regulation and improvement of rivers. But in Bengal railways were constructed but nothing practically has been done to counteract their adverse effect on the rivers over which they have passed and to arrest the consequent deterioration which has been hastened thereby. So I am tempted to put down that the blessings of railways have been more than counterbalanced by the deterioration of our rivers.

"The physical conditions of our rivers, tidal and non-tidal, torrential and slow, dead and dying all are to be studied scientifically as the Seine has been studied in France. The natural state of any river depends upon a variety of physical conditions."

#### VII—WHY IS BENGAL IN DEATH GRIP?

A writer in the *Basumati* (Aug. 5, 1933) describes the condition of Rajshahi. We give translations of certain portions :—

"I have toured from village to village ; everywhere the old inhabitants with tears in their eyes have related to me the prosperity of the district half-a-century or more ago. . . . I have heard of the glorious days of Natore, Putia and Dighapatia Raj families. . . . I have heard that in 1859 from Natore alone raw silk and six varieties of Muslin used to be exported to Europe as also to Bussora, Mocha, Jedda, Pegu and Malacca. I have heard that on the bosom of the living rivers Mahananda, Narada, Baral, Atrai, Jamuna and Gadai, country boats laden with commodities used to ply and crowd the ports. I have heard that the muscular Kaibartas, the heroic Namasudras, the

high-spirited Rajbansis used to compete in health and vigour with the Brahmins.

"But to-day the Narada, the Baral, the Gadai and other rivers are being dried up—thanks to railway communication, the flowing rivers have been neglected and allowed to be silted up. . . . The different industrial arts have decayed along with the people. The Census Report tells a doleful tale—the population has dwindled down considerably and some castes are threatened with extinction. Thousands of big has of lands have become depopulated and are overgrown with jungles. While the local peasants on account of the deterioration of their health due to malaria, are incapacitated for hard work, a constant stream of immigrants is to a certain extent filling up the gap—namely Oriyas, Santals, Oraos etc. . . . Why is this sad condition? Let the government report explain: 'The effect of unfavourable agricultural conditions are accentuated by the prevalence of malaria.' "

Prof. M. N. Saha, who has himself taken a leading part in rendering me help in relieving the flood-stricken, contributes a valuable article, entitled 'Need for a Hydraulic Research Laboratory in Bengal' (*Acharyya P. C. Rây 70th Birthday Commemoration Volume*) from the foreword of which I quote a few lines:

"Within the past ten years (1922-32) large regions in Bengal have been visited by two catastrophic, and many other minor floods, causing widespread havoc and distress amongst the rural population. Acharyya Prafulla Chandra Rây has been foremost amongst the leaders of the country in the matter of organisation of relief for the flood-stricken people. He identified himself so thoroughly with this work that Mahatma Gandhi jocularly describes him as the "Doctor of floods". When the writer of this article was asked to contribute an article to the Jubilee volume which is to be presented to the Acharyya on the happy occasion of his seventieth birthday, he thought that nothing could be more pleasing to him for this occasion than a scientific analysis of the causes of these catastrophic floods and other attendant evils, such as malaria and erosion, and suggestion of measures for combating them."

But who will listen to his warning?

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# POLITICO-ECONOMIC

## CHAPTER IX.

### MILITARY EXPENDITURE—A HUGE BURDEN ON THE PEOPLE OF INDIA.

"India has been the English barrack in the Oriental seas."—  
Viscount Cranborne, afterwards Marquis of Salisbury.

Very few have now the hardihood to deny that India has been saddled with a military expenditure far in excess of her own needs. The military expenditure of India, which at present amounts to nearly 55 crores of rupees,<sup>1</sup> swallows 47 per cent. of the total revenue. The following table exhibits the figures of net military expenditure for each year since 1921-22 :

1921-22	...	...	Rs. 69.81 crores.
1922-23	...	...	„ 65.27 „
1923-24	...	...	„ 56.23 „
1924-25	...	...	„ 55.63 „
1925-26	...	...	„ 56.00 „
1926-27	...	...	„ 55.97 „
1927-28	...	...	„ 54.92 „
1928-29	...	...	„ 55.10 <sup>1</sup> „

#### I—HOW HAS INDIA BEEN "BLED WHITE".

During the Boer War 10,000 white soldiers under Sir George White were locked up at Ladysmith in spite of the Russian menace threatening India. During the late war again India was "bled white" (*i.e.* denuded of soldiers, British as well as Indian), to quote Lord Hardinge, and internal peace was maintained practically with the aid of policemen. There is thus not a shadow of justification for the disproportionate

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<sup>1</sup> The military authorities are credited with a solid reduction of Rs. 6 crores in about 50 crores in 1934-35. How has this been achieved? By postponement of re-equipment and building programme and partly

strength of the army. The fact is that the army quartered in India is a part and parcel of the Imperial army kept on such a footing as to ensure the supremacy of England in Asia from the far East to the near East. If one were to take stock of the unjust and iniquitous burdens thrown upon India for purposes in which she was not in the least concerned a separate volume would have to be written. Take the several Afghan Wars, which were forced upon the hapless Amirs because they were suspected of intriguing with Russia or because they, as Sovereign powers, did not think it consonant with their dignity or interests to seek alliance with the British Power.<sup>2</sup> Take again the Abyssinian War and the Chinese Wars. In the former case the semi-savage king Coomasie had taken it into his head to imprison a handful of Englishmen and on his refusal to set them at liberty a war was declared. Indian troops were shipped from Bombay. The expedition under the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Robert Napier, landed from the Gulf of Aden. Magdala was readily taken; in fact it was a case of "I came, I saw, I conquered". The original estimate for the war

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by reduction of stores and "partly real permanent retrenchment and economies". Sir George Schuster did not care to analyse the part under inverted commas.—*Cf.* Budget Speech for 1934-35.

Compare also: "The military expenditure reaches nearly £20,000,000 and has the melancholy distinction of being probably the highest, except one, in the world."—W. E. Gladstone (*Nineteenth Century*, Sept. 1878).

<sup>2</sup> "Last year I referred to the enormous expense of the Afghan War—about £15,000,000—the whole of which ought to have been thrown on the taxation of the people of England, because it was a war commanded by the English Cabinet for objects supposed to be English".—John Bright (1859).

This refers evidently to the First Afghan War. The Second Afghan War which was of England's own seeking cost another Rs. 28 crores. Lord Northbrook refused to be a tool in the hands of the Secretary of State for India (Lord Salisbury) to pick a quarrel with the Amir of Afghanistan and resigned in disgust. His successor Lord Lytton came out to carry out the mandate of Beaconsfield ministry.

*Cf.* "There are several places which are called the keys of India. There is Merv . . . there is . . . Ghuzni, there is Balkh, there is Kandahar. But my Lords, the key of India is not Herat or Kandahar. The key of India is London". (Lord Beaconsfield).—Oxford and Asquith: *Fifty Years of Parliament*, i. 55.

expenses was £1,000,000 but, as invariably happens in India, (*e.g.* in the three Afghan Wars, in the Delhi construction, and in the Back Bay Reclamation) it was exceeded many times over and the cost of relieving thirty captives amounted to £10,000,000. The two Chinese or the "Opium" wars arose out of the bitter protests of the Chinese against the introduction of the drug; it was, however, forced down their reluctant throat at the point of the British bayonet and a considerable burden of the war was thrown upon the revenues of India.<sup>3</sup>

It might be urged that as India was primarily benefited by this unhallowed traffic, no injustice was done to her; but the treaty ports extorted from China have immensely benefited British trade. I conclude with the Burmese War. It suited the purpose of Britain to pick a quarrel with King Theebaw. There were rich forests of teak wood, precious mines of oil and gems. Manchester also wanted an expansion of her markets. Cupidity coupled with political foresight

<sup>3</sup> Cf. F. R. Harris: *J. N. Tata*, p. 12:

"I am very sorry to hear of the decision that India is to continue to pay for the ordinary expenses of troops employed from this country in Abyssinia . . . Surely this is neither a question of hiring or lending, but simply one of payment by the country which employs the troops. I believe that I am right in saying that all the expenses of British troops employed in the Mutiny, who came from England, were paid out of the revenues of India. Again, I was not aware that any portion of the cost of China War had been debited against India. I am sure that it ought not to have been so, . . . ."—Lord Lawrence to Sir Stafford Northcote, Secretary of State for India, 1867-8.

Lord Cranborne characterised the Abyssinian war as "one of the wickedest wars ever undertaken." His Lordship also uttered these memorable words: "The special injustice of the course now about to be pursued, consists in this: that when we employ English troops on an Indian duty—as in the case of the Mutiny—they are paid for out of the Indian revenues from the moment they land in that country; but when we employ Indian troops on an Imperial duty, we say that India must pay for them."—*Hansard*, Vol. cxc., pp. 359, 407.

Indeed, this vicious doctrine has become so deeply engrained in English politics, that Sir R. Temple assigns as one of the causes why "England must keep India", the following: "Because the Indian Empire . . . has rendered assistance in British wars waged beyond its own limits, in Persia, Abyssinia, and China."—*India in 1880*, p. 197.

hastened a conflict. Burma was annexed and added to India. The cost of the war as also of the army of occupation was thrown primarily upon Bengal by increasing the salt-tax, in other words, the only luxury, which the poor ryot enjoys. A pinch of salt—was rendered dearer and sometimes beyond his reach so that British exploiters might reap a rich harvest.<sup>4</sup>

I have cited the above instances only to show that India has absolutely no control over her revenues. Millions are squandered for Imperial aggrandizement; the loud protests of her people count for nothing. She is "bled" profusely, to quote the frank admission of the late Lord Salisbury.

In support of this assertion we can quote the following opinion expressed not by an Indian politician, but by the Government of India :

"The Imperial Government keeps in India and quarters upon the revenues of that country as large a portion of its army as it thinks can possibly be required to maintain its dominion there; that it habitually treats that army as a reserve force available for Imperial purposes; that it has uniformly detached European regiments from the garrison of India to take part in Imperial wars whenever it has been found necessary or convenient to do so; and, more than this, that it has drawn not less freely upon the native army of India, towards the maintenance of which it contributes nothing, to aid in contests outside of India with which the Indian Government has had little or no concern."

Is anything more necessary to prove that the army in India is of an Imperial nature maintained with an eye to Imperial purposes? Can the Government of India go back upon the statement quoted above?

We make no apology for presenting the army headquarters with yet another quotation in support of our contention and that from the writing of the present Prime Minister

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. "That means that if the accounts of Upper Burma had continued to be kept separate, it would have been 18 or 19 years before Upper Burma was able to make the two ends meet . . . This return prepared by the Accountant-General of Rangoon, and laid by the Government of India on the table of this Council, shows that for more than 40 years the whole of Burma was not paying its way; and as a result we find that Burma is indebted to-day to India to the tune of about 62 crores of rupees".—*Gokhale's Speeches* (Natesan & Co.), pp. 194-96.

of England. Referring to 'the epoch of bombastic Imperialism at the expense of India' he said :

"It is unspeakably mean of us to place the burden on the Indian's back simply because he must bear any load we put upon him. Nine-tenths of the charge of the Army in India is an Imperial charge. Canada, South Africa, and Australia should bear it as much as India. It is a piece of the most bitter cynicism to find the Imperial doors of our colonies shut in the faces of these poor people, who bear such an inordinate share of the cost of Imperial maintenance, and at whose expense these Dominions are protected from the fear of war. If £8,000,000 of the Army charges were met by the whole Empire we might look the Indian tax-payer in the face as honest men. At present we cannot do so."

"The last and 'most unkindest cut of all' has come from the decision arrived at by the Capitation Tribunal—a decision which was published only on the 20th December, 1933 and by which the Imperial contribution to Indian defence expenditure has been fixed at £1,500,000 (and not £18,000,000 as recommended by the present Prime Minister of England in his pre-Prime Minister days). And why have the members of the Tribunal recommended this annual grant? Because they hold—(a) that the armed forces in India constitute a force ready in an emergency to take the field at once, a position which does not exist elsewhere in the Empire, and also a force which is specially available for immediate use in the East, and which has on occasions been so used ; and (b) that India is a training ground for active service such as does not exist elsewhere in the Empire.

"Can it be said after this that the size and cost of the army in India are only such as are absolutely necessary for the defence of India against external aggression and the maintenance of internal order?"—*The A. B. Patrika*, March 3, 1934.

Sir John Strachey, an authority on problems of Indian administration, said years ago :

"The ultimate basis of our dominion in India is obviously our military . . . power, and this to be capable of being exercised on sea and land not only within India itself but far beyond her borders. . . . In Persia and the Persian Gulf, in Arabia, in Africa, in Tibet, in China, and in Siam there are great Indian and Imperial interests which, let us trust,



British statesmen will never forget, and which they will defend with all the power of the Empire."

While Sir John Strachey only referred to Imperial interests, the author of *The Failure of Lord Curzon* was more explicit. He wrote as follows :

"It may be alleged that the present Indian army is not in excess of Indian requirements. The *London Standard* disposed of this assertion with succinct clearness a few months ago. 'Ladysmith,' it wrote, 'we should remember, was defended mainly by regiments which had been embarked in India. It was an Indian general, commanding native troops from India, who relieved the legations at Peking; and it was from native regiments that our Chinese contingent of occupation was supplied. Since the beginning of the war in South Africa more than 13,000 British officers and men had been sent to that country from India, and they were accompanied by over 9,000 natives, principally followers and attendants. To China there were forwarded from India 1,300 British officers and men, some 20,000 native troops, and 17,500 native followers. *Such is the scale on which India, at the shortest notice, and without dislocating her establishments, can contribute towards the military capabilities of the Empire beyond her own frontiers.*' That is just it. India, starving India, is being used to feed, train and equip great bodies of troops for employment outside India."

Thus the *London Standard* blundered into downright truth.

Even a prominent propagandist of British Imperialism like Sir Valentine Chirol could not overlook the fact which the military authorities in India want to discard. He said :

"It is no secret that the Government of India have frequently remonstrated in vain when India has been charged full measure and overflowing in respect of military operations in which the part borne by her has been governed less by her own direct interests than by the necessity of making up with the help of Indian contingents the deficiencies of our military organizations at home."

## II—INIQUITOUS CRUSHING MILITARY BURDEN THROWN ON INDIA.

"The whole question of the expenditure on the British Army in India surely requires reconsideration. In 1922 an eminent Civil Servant 'holding one of the highest posts in the gift of the Crown' wrote thus to the Inchcape Committee :

"The British Army in India is not there from entirely altruistic motives. India is a valuable training ground for troops, it gives a free supply to Great Britain of trained reservists, while it affords a livelihood to numbers of white men of the Officer class in the Army as well as to a few thousand more of the same class, to be found in the various European services, whose presence there and the authority that they wield are at bottom based upon the British Army in India.

"The same British Army in India is the backbone of the vast European interests in the country, which, as history shows, had to employ European troops of their own at a time when their commercial stake in India was infinitely smaller than it is to-day.<sup>5</sup> Again the British Army is undoubtedly maintained to protect the lives of European men, women and children in India, in case at any time racial hostility or mob violence should put them in danger. It is true that the British Army by its presence protects millions of Indian lives, but its *raison d'être* in this country is the maintenance of British rule, the safety of Europeans, and the security of British commerce. It cannot, of course, protect those interests without also protecting Indian lives and property, but when two parties receive mutual benefits, it is not *prima facie* unfair that both should contribute to the cost of them, and I cannot withhold sympathy from the Indian, who finds his taxes rising to meet the ever-increasing cost of a constant succession of British soldiers, whose services are permanently valuable to Great Britain, but are not permanently valuable to India."—*The A. B. Patrika*, April 6, 1934.

Sir P. C. Sivaswamy Aiyar, who is a politician of the moderate school and who commands universal respect, has made the question of the Indian Army his special study. A few lines on his latest contribution to this subject may be quoted here: "The Simon Commission have dexterously devised a scheme which will keep India in perpetual bondage and tied to the chariot-wheels of the Imperial Government. . . . . At no stage is it contemplated that the Indian Legislature should have any part or lot in the control of the Imperial Army which she must subsidise. . . . . As a matter of fact, the late Lord Haldane adumbrated a proposal to make the British troops in India a charge on the Imperial

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. "Who profited by it [the conquest]? The answer must be, English commerce has profited by it. We have here a great foreign trade, which may grow to be enormous, and this trade is secured to us so long as we are masters of the Government of India."—Seeley: *The Expansion of England* (1884), p. 263.

revenues alone, the India Government contributing her own proper share".—*Triveni* (1930).

### III—MERCENARY ARMY *vs.* NATIONAL ARMY.

The question of military expenditure to be borne by Indian revenues however in its ultimate analysis, centres round the fundamental problem of a mercenary army *vs.* a national army as being necessary for the defence of India. The British Bureaucracy has, ever since the days of Clive, been familiar with the merits of a mercenary army which brought India under the British Crown. Seeley thus writes :

"No one, who has remarked the childish eagerness with which historians indulge their national vanity, will be surprised to find that our British writers in describing these battles seem unable to discern the sepoys. Read Macaulay's *Essay on Clive* ; everywhere it is 'the imperial people', 'the mighty children of the sea,' 'none could resist Clive and his Englishmen.' But if once it is admitted that the sepoys always outnumbered the English, and that they kept pace with the English in efficiency as soldiers, the whole theory which attributes our successes to an immeasurable natural superiority in valour falls to the ground.

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"India can hardly be said to have been conquered at all by foreigners ; she has rather conquered herself.

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"India has been conquered by an army of which four-fifths were natives and only one-fifth English.

"For mercenary armies were everywhere ; they were at the service of every one who could pay them or win an influence over them ; and any one who commanded a mercenary army was on a level with the greatest potentates of India, since in the dissolution of authority the only force left was military force.

"I showed you that of the army which won our victories four-fifths consisted of native troops. That we were able to hire these native troops for service in India, was due to the

fact that *the feeling of nationality had no existence there*. Now if the feeling of a common nationality began to exist there only feebly, if, without inspiring any active desire to drive out the foreigner, it only created a notion that it was shameful to assist him in maintaining his dominion, from that day almost our Empire would cease to exist.

"And thus the mystic halo of *marvel* and *miracle* which has gathered round this Empire disappears before a fixed scrutiny. . . . The love of independence presupposes political consciousness. Where this is wanting, a foreign Government will be regarded passively, and such a Government may continue for a long time and prosper without exerting any extraordinary skill."

The army policy of the British rulers of India has necessarily been governed by a complete mistrust of those sections of the people in whom there has been the faintest dawn of political consciousness.

"The policy persisted in by the Government was thus described and criticized by Sir K. G. Gupta :

"When the English first secured the sovereignty of India there was a National Army in all the provinces, officered by Indians who usually came from the land-holding and middle classes, whose interest it was to keep up the martial spirit among their tenants and neighbours. But the British policy has, from the very commencement, been to deprive Indians of all authority in the Army, and recruitment has been confined to the rank and non-commissioned officers.

"As the British power and territories increased, even this limited recruitment for the Army was taken away from province to province, until at present it consists of Sikhs and a few other tribes; but a very considerable part of it is made up of Pathans who come from beyond the N. W. Frontier and of Gurkhas who inhabit Nepal, and are thus not even British subjects and are mere mercenaries.

"Yet when Clive won the battle of Plassey and Wellesley vanquished the Mahrattas, no Sikhs or Gurkhas entered the composition of the Indian Army. The absolute exclusion of the middle classes from all positions of command has taken away all incentive to foster the martial spirit, with the result that the field for recruitment has been gradually narrowing down, so that the Indian Army must needs seek for recruits outside the bounds of British India. One may almost exclaim that the *Pax Britannica* of which so much is made in certain quarters has been

the greatest drawback of British rule in India, for it has effectually emasculated the whole nation and has made it incapable of doing anything in self-defence."

"The division of the people into martial and non-martial races is artificial and unreasonable and must be ascribed to the decision of the authorities to exclude some races from military service and the development of the martial spirit for reasons other than efficiency. The exclusion of Bengalis from the Army has always been resented by them. The well-known remarks of Bishop Heber, Lord Bishop of Calcutta, would bear repetition :

"I have, indeed, understood from many quarters, that the Bengalees are regarded as the greatest cowards in India; and that partly owing to this reputation, and partly to their inferior size, the Sepoy regiments are always recruited from Behar and the Upper provinces. Yet that little army with which Lord Clive did such wonders, was chiefly raised from Bengal. So much are all men the creatures of circumstance and training."—*The A. B. Patrika*, March 29, 1934.

"In reply to a question put in the Legislative Assembly in 1921 the Finance Member said that out of the total expenditure in India, including that of the provinces, 33½ per cent. was for defence,<sup>a</sup> 11¼ per cent. for sinking fund and interest charges on the national debt, 4 per cent. for education and ¾ per cent. for sanitation. The total expenditure then amounted to 127.60 crores. To-day it is not more than 115.10 crores. It was found at that time that even countries which paid out of their plenty did not pay as much as India which had to pay out of her poverty. What we have said will be evident from the following :—

- (1) Even a rich country like England did not spend more than 20 per cent. of its total expenditure on defence (army, navy and air force).
- (2) Canada did not spend more than 11 per cent.
- (3) The expenditure of South Africa on this account did not exceed 8 per cent.
- (4) Portugal spent 20 per cent.
- (5) Norway spent 11 per cent.

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<sup>a</sup> If only the "Central" revenue be considered it is nearly 50%.

While poor India had to spend 33 per cent. and that too in peace time! The situation is the same to-day and military expenditure sits on the chest of the country like an incubus from which she cannot escape till the whole policy is changed. Reams of hiccoughing platitudes lodged in the pigeon-holes of the Military Department will not change the actual state of affairs; and no amount of jugglery with figures will release from this item of expenditure the money that is urgently required to accomplish developments in various departments which alone can herald the dawn of a new day for India."—*The A. B. Patrika*, March 3, 1934.

#### IV—MILITARY EXPENDITURE IN INDIA AND ELSEWHERE.

In India, "large masses are submerged below a poverty line which lies far deeper than in any other country of the world except China."

When we look round to find some way out of the deadlock, we find Sir Walter Layton's statement that the present *military expenditure of India is so large both absolutely and in relation to the revenue of India as to be a dominating factor in India's financial situation.*

Briefly stated the situation is this that at present more than 50 per cent. of the federal income is earmarked for military expenditure. The budget can only be balanced by the inclusion of revenues which accrue in the Provinces and which, it is admitted in principle, must sooner or later be completely surrendered to the Provinces. Without those revenues the federal budget would now be in serious default.

India, in spite of her poverty, has to bear a burden relatively heavier than that of Great Britain and ten times heavier than that of Australia, which has no land frontiers and is protected by the British Navy. Her expenditure on the Army has risen from £20 millions before the war to £41 millions at the present day.

#### *Fear of Russian Aggression.*

"Is the fear of Russian military aggression well founded, or is this a traditional bogey which in the modern world can

be seen to be a manifest absurdity? East and West the whole world is now politically conscious, and the old methods of imperial aggrandizement by invasion and conquest belong to an older dispensation which has passed away. No sane Government now a days will be guilty of the folly of attempting the forcible annexation and absorption of alien and unwilling populations."—F. G. Pratt, C.S.I., I.C.S. (retired), formerly Commissioner of the Northern Division, Bombay Presidency, quoted in *The A. B. Patrika*, 30th January, 1933.

#### V—INDIANISATION AND RETRENCHMENT.

Mr. H. Gray wrote thus in the London *Daily News* when the Inchcape Committee set about its work of exploring avenues of retrenchment in India :

"The most live question in India at the moment is the demand for a national army. . . . The last two Budgets, with their enormous deficits, have made her realise how ill she can afford to pay for the costly British garrison. Military expenditure hangs like a mill-stone round her neck stultifying the promise of the new Parliaments, blocking every avenue towards nation-building.

"India demands control of military expenditure and the 'Indianisation' of the army as a proof of our *bona fides*. Till Britain makes a substantial reduction in the cost of the British garrison and recruits Indian officers on a more liberal scale, India will not believe that we really intend her to become self-governing. She points out that her heart is set not on conquest, but on such things as compulsory education, industrial development, better roads and railways, and that all her pet schemes are abortive for want of funds."

Unless and until the expenditure on the Army is decreased no scheme of nation-building can be given effect to—nothing can be done to augment the economic resources of the country. Mr. Gray put the matter concisely when he said :

"While India is clamouring for more rice in every hut, cheaper water in every canal, more saris for every bride, more schools for every boy, England is maintaining British battalions each of which costs 21½ lakhs per annum compared with 5 lakhs for an Indian battalion, and has enormously increased the numbers of headquarters and divisional staffs. There is an insistent demand, both within and without the Legislatures, for a reduction in the number of 'brass hats' for a gift of at least

25 per cent. of the King's Commissions to Indians every year, for free admission of Indians to the Navy and Air Force, and generally for the development of every path by which Indians may learn to take an honourable part in the defence of their country. In fact, India will only consent to pay for an army if she sees it gradually becoming an entirely Indian army. . . . After all it is natural for the nationally conscious to wish to defend their nation."

"Substantial 'Indianisation' of the Army will gratify not only the retrenching, but also the reforming instincts of the people. The error of years may not be rectified at once. It may not be rectified at once, it may not be possible to replace all British soldiers and officers within a short time; but a policy which will be instrumental in attaining this consummation must be adopted. Above all that mentality which makes man 'build his trust on reeking tube and iron shard' and leave out of his calculation the invincible soul of man, should be changed"—*The A. B. Patrika*, April 10, 1934.

Chesney thus wrote in 1868 on the status of Indians in the army of India (*Indian Polity*):

"A non-commissioned officer is superior to a private sepoy, and a commissioned to a non-commissioned officer; but a European sergeant, when attached to a native regiment, is superior to both, and there is an immeasurable distance between the oldest subadar and the youngest subaltern.

"As to the supposed incapacity of natives for war, such an opinion is sufficiently refuted by a mere reference to history. No brilliant soldier has appeared under the British colours, because our system rendered such a phenomenon impossible; but Indian history abounds in instances of brilliant native

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<sup>7</sup> Contrast this policy with that of Aurangzib, said to be the most anti-Hindu of the Moghul Emperors.

"On his birthday, 30th September, 1664, the Emperor (Aurangzib) appointed Mirza Rajah Jai Singh to put down Shivaji. Under him were deputed Dilir Khan, Daud Khan Qureshi, Rajah Rai Singh Sisodia, Ihtisham Khan Shaikhzada, Qubad Khan, Rajah Sujan Singh Bundela, Kirat Singh (a son of Jai Singh), Mulla Yahia Navaiyat (a Bijapuri noble who had come over to the Mughals), and many other officers, with 14,000 troopers.



generalship, displayed by men who, if their warfare was rude, were at least vastly superior to their times and to the men around them. This is a true test of genius."

Half a century ago, I wrote thus:—

"When on a recent occasion the flower of the Indian youth approached the Viceregal throne with a prayer that they might be allowed to bear arms in the service of their sovereign and country, they met with a cold rebuff. It is no doubt thought that, if the Indian is enrolled to-day as a volunteer, he will to-morrow demand a commission and an honourable career in the army. The blind selfishness, the arrogance, the superciliousness and the overweening conceit of the dominant race, cannot tolerate that the sons of the Indian nobility and gentry should even be relieved from the ban of excommunication. Sir John Kaye has quoted Bacon's well-known aphorism, in which the philosopher points out the constant risk a governing caste has to run when it depends upon mercenaries for the preservation of its power. Imitate the policy of the Mogul emperors; throw open the military career to the *élite* of the Indian empire, and you only conduce to its stability. Professor Seeley has very well said that India hangs like a mill-

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"Jai Singh's career had been one of undimmed brilliancy from the day when he, an orphan of twelve, had received his first appointment in the Mughal army (1617). Since then he had fought under the imperial banner in every part of the empire,—from Balkh in Central Asia to Bijapur in the Deccan, from Qandahar in the west to Mujgir in the east. Hardly a year had passed during the long reign of Shah Jahan when this Rajput chieftain had not seen active service somewhere and received some promotion for conspicuous merit. His marked ability had found recognition in his being given the command of the Van or one of the wings in the Mughal armies led by princes of the blood in campaigns beyond India. Latterly he had commanded in chief. In diplomacy he had attained to a success surpassing even his victories in the field. Wherever there was a difficult or delicate work to be done, the Emperor had only to turn to Jai Singh. A man of infinite tact and patience, an adept in the ceremonious courtesy of the Muslims, a master of Turki and Persian, besides Urdu and the Rajput dialect, he was an ideal leader of the composite army of Afghan and Turks, Rajputs and Hindusthanis, that followed the crescent banner of the sovereign of Delhi."—J. N. Sarkar: *History of Aurangzeb*.

stone round the neck of England. At a critical moment she may know to her bitter cost what it is to coop up a large portion of her army in a distant land. There was a time when Britain too enjoyed *pax Romana*, but her inhabitants had become so degenerate as to forget the use of arms. When the Emperor Honorius withdrew his legions, when danger nearer home threatened Rome, we all know in what a sorry plight the Britons were left. The insidious policy which England has been pursuing in India is replete with danger."—*India*.

The progress of Indianisation of the army is even now imperceptible. No doubt a military college has been opened at Dehra Dun and a start has been made in the Indianisation of eight units. A member of the assembly declared sometime ago that at this pace complete Indianisation would take five centuries! Moreover most invidious distinction has been made between cadets trained here and those at Sandhurst.

Trust begets trust as distrust is the parent of distrust. The Great Akbar who built the Mogul Empire on solid foundations pursued this bold policy and was richly rewarded. His erstwhile enemies, the Hindu princes, became the pillars of his throne. The history of Scottish Highlands was disfigured by frequent rebellions till the middle of the eighteenth century. The Elder Pitt conceived the bold policy of opening honourable careers for the Highland youth in the British Army and the result has been that the British flag has been carried to the remotest corner of the earth by the Highland regiments. Who can say that the terrorist activities in Bengal do not spring from similar causes and will not yield to similar treatment! Who will deny that the surest means of keeping India in the British Commonwealth is to let her have her full stature helped but not hindered by the British people.

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## CHAPTER X.

### ORGY OF EXTRAVAGANCE.

"Let the Hon. Gentlemen imagine a government like that in India, over which the payers of the taxes have not the slightest control; for the great body of the people in India have, as we all know, no control in any way over the government. Neither is there any independent English opinion that has any control over the government, the only opinions being those of the government itself, or those of the Military and Civil Services, and chiefly of the latter. They are not the payers of the taxes; they are the spenders and the enjoyers of the taxes, and therefore the government is in the most of unfortunate position possible for the fulfilment of the great duties that must develop upon every wise and just government. The civil service, being privileged, is arrogant, and I had almost said tyrannous, . . . and the military service, which, as everywhere else where it is not checked by the resolution of the tax-payers and civilians, is clamorous and insatiable for greater expenditure."—John Bright.

"India is in the unfortunate position, that an increasing portion of her revenue, now amounting to one-third, is spent in England."—Henry Fawcett: *Political Economy* (1883).

He who pays the piper commands the tune is usually considered a trite saying. In India it is true that we have the "Assembly" at Delhi, with a "Speaker" or President. It is, however, at best a toy parliament, where the members, the so-called representatives of the people, are welcome to indulge in mock debates over the salt tax, the military expenditure, and so forth. But the Viceroy by his power of certification makes short work of the resolutions passed even by an overwhelming majority. Sometimes even a Viceroy in a moment of despair unburdens himself to the effect that he is utterly helpless in effecting economy.<sup>1</sup> Whenever he tries to apply the retrenchment axe, the civil and the

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<sup>1</sup> "The waste of public money is great . . . I have only one object in all I do; I believe we have not done our duty to the people of this land. Millions have been spent on the conquering race, which might have been spent in enriching and elevating the children of the soil . . .

military services raise a hue and cry and attack him more or less openly. Nearly fifty years ago I wrote: "Vested interests thrive in India with the rank luxuriance of a tropical climate. . . . An outlay once sanctioned is sure to become a permanent drain on the treasury ; an office once created is sure to become petrified, gathering accretions in the course of time, even though the necessity for both has ceased to exist."—*India* (1886).

Since the assumption of the title of Empress of India by Queen Victoria many a Viceroy of India has been seized with the mania of playing the role of the Great Mogul, deaf to all considerations of humanity. The year 1877 is memorable in the annals of modern India for more than one reason. In that year a terrible famine raged in the Madras Presidency and swept off five millions of people, and that very year was chosen for the celebration of the ceremony which affixed to the diadem of the Queen the proud title of *Indiæ Imperatrix*. The graphic description of the situation by Aberigh-Mackay has become almost classical. I cannot do better than quote a few lines here: "I missed two people at the Delhi Assemblage of 1877. All the gram-fed secretaries and most of the alcoholic chiefs were there ; but the famine-haunted villager and the delirium-shattered, opium-eating Chinaman<sup>3</sup> who had to pay the bill, were not present. When our villager wants to realize a political idea, he dies of famine. You will ask, 'What has all this talk of food and famine to do with the villager?' I reply, 'Everything.' Famine is the horizon of the Indian villager ; insufficient food is the foreground. Amid this easeful and luscious splendour the villager labours and starves.

"Reams of hiccoughing platitudes lodged in the pigeon-holes of the Home Office by all the gentlemen clerks and gentlemen

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It is impossible, unless we spend less on 'interests', and more on the people . . . . The welfare of the people of India is our primary object. If we are not here for their good, we should not be here at all."—The Earl of Mayo.

<sup>3</sup> In those days, the Chinaman by swallowing Indian opium used to contribute some six or seven crores of rupees to the Indian exchequer.

farmers of the world cannot mend this. While the Indian villager has to maintain the glorious phantasmagoria of an Imperial policy, while he has to support legions of scarlet soldiers, golden chuprassies, purple politicals, and green commissions, he must remain the hunger-stricken, overdriven phantom he is."

#### I—CONSTRUCTION OF NEW DELHI.

Dr. Will Durant, one of the ablest and most discerning of the representative American intellectuals, and a former Professor of Philosophy at Columbia University, has just returned home from six months' visit to India. He has travelled here with both open eyes and an open mind. Speaking of the waste of public money for creating a New Delhi he observes: "Taxes were never as high in India as they are now. In the midst of heart-breaking poverty the government treats itself, at the cost of thousands of dispossessions, to new governmental buildings at Delhi,<sup>a</sup> whose cost is staggering, and whose alien style is not only out of place, but almost an insult to the greatest builders since the Egyptians. Seven months of every twelve it transfers the capital, all its personnel and machinery, to vacation resorts in the mountains at an expense of many millions of dollars. From time to time it holds gorgeous Durbars, to overawe the people who pay for the ceremony tens of millions. The result is a stupendous national debt, which

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<sup>a</sup> The Viceroy's house stands in the midst of an estate of 330 acres. Its construction absorbed  $4\frac{1}{2}$  million bricks, nearly  $1\frac{1}{2}$  million cubic feet of stone, 7,500 tons of cement and 1,350 tons of iron and steel. It possesses 340 rooms,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles of corridors, 227 columns, 35 loggias, 37 fountains, 14 lifts and 300 telephones; the electrical installation cost ten lakhs of rupees; it is provided with a complete water-supply system and sanitary installation, an electrically equipped kitchen and a refrigerating plant—altogether a very remarkable achievement for little over eight years.

An American friend of mine writes to me:

"A wealthy American business man with whom I visited New Delhi last January said, he regarded the buildings as among the ugliest architecturally he had seen in any national capital. I, myself, have seen New Delhi in the background with the miserable hovels of the workers in the foreground: and I can never forget the picture!"

has increased from 7 million pounds in 1792 to 307 millions in 1913.<sup>4</sup> This alone clinches the whole Indian case. It pays to be free."

When the scheme of the construction of the new capital at the unhealthy sandheaps of Delhi was first mooted in 1912 it was given out that the total cost would not exceed five or six crores of rupees. The expenditure has, however, now run up to sixteen crores and it is feared that it may even mount up to thirty crores. Herein lies the explanation as to why the Government of India "swoops down and carries off the booty in its mighty talons" in the shape of the unrighteous Meston Award. Bengal is sadly in need of money for primary education, sanitation and irrigation as pointed out in previous chapters; but these measures must be postponed in favour of the grandiose symbol of an Imperial policy. Disease born of ignorance and poverty may decimate the masses but the pompous pageant must have precedence in order to strike the imagination of the oriental and extort the admiration of the American globe-trotter and the travelling M.P., who are struck with this outward manifestation of the "Wealth of Ind" and are inclined to burst forth: "*C'est magnifique*"! The superficial observer forgets that behind the gorgeous show there stalk in the land hunger and poverty.<sup>5</sup>

Towards the end of the seventeenth century a French King brought his fair country to the verge of ruin. It is sad to

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<sup>4</sup> At present it stands at Rs. 1,210 crores according to Sir Samuel Hoare.

<sup>5</sup> It is but fair to add that every American tourist is not a globe-trotter. There are now and then keen observers, like Upton Close. Cf. "We are just in time to attend the Chamber of Princes at Delhi on the gracious invitation of the Secretary on Political Affairs. This unique legislative body combines the pageantry of oriental power with Roberts' 'Rules of Order.' Under the grave Viceroy, Lord Irwin, sit the members in their cloth of gold and jewels, everyone a sovereign in his own right and in addition a millionaire (only the cream of the seven hundred Maharajahs and Chiefs can belong), and fritter away their time passing in sincere compliments. As they drive up in bejewelled Rolls-Royces (one in a solid silver chassis) *we think of their subjects, the most destitute people we have seen*" (the italics are mine). —*The Revolt of Asia*, pp. 43-44.

reflect that in the third decade of the twentieth century the British rulers are emulating the pernicious example of Louis XIV. "Of the residences of the French Kings none stood in a more salubrious air or commanded a fairer prospect. . . . Soon, however, the magnificent King conceived an inexplicable disgust for his birth-place. He quitted Saint Germaine for Versailles, and expended sums almost fabulous in the vain attempt to create a paradise on a spot singularly sterile and unwholesome, all sand or mud, without wood, without water, and without game."<sup>6</sup> "Towards the end of that decade (1682), 36,000 men were employed on the buildings and the park and the permanent population of the palace and its dependents numbered 10,000. . . . It has been reckoned that in 50 years, the equivalent of £16,000,000 was spent on Versailles, the Triaon and lesser palaces."<sup>7</sup> Another authority states "that 20 million pounds were spent on the palace, gardens and works of art, the accounts for which were destroyed by the king."

Buckle has depicted in his masterly style the miseries and destitution of the people which followed in the wake of the pomp and extravagance of the "*grand monarque*." The Historian of Civilization quotes eminent English authorities, among others Locke and Sir William Temple, who bear testimony to the forlorn position of that noble country (France): "The French peasantry are wholly dispirited by labour and want. In 1691, another observer, proceeding from Calais, writes, 'From hence, travelling to Paris, there was opportunity enough to observe what a prodigious state of poverty the ambition and absoluteness of a tyrant can reduce an opulent and fertile country to. There were visible all the marks and signs of a growing misfortune; all the dismal indications of an overwhelming calamity. The fields were uncultivated, the villages unpeopled, the houses drooping to decay.'

"I have known in France poor people to sell their beds, and lie upon straw; sell their pots, kettles, and all their neces-

<sup>6</sup> Macaulay: *History of England*.

<sup>7</sup> G. H. Ferris in the *Daily Chronicle* quoted in *The Bengalee*, May 30, 1919.

sary household goods, to content the unmerciful collectors of the king's taxes."

Waste and extravagance are writ large on the policy of our rulers. One would have derived some consolation if they had stopped short at squandering the vast resources of the land ; but they are setting a pernicious example to the Feudatories as well. Thus we read : "The Nizam's red and white sandstone palace in New Delhi designed by Sir F. Lutyens which is nearly completed will cost £157,500," says a message in *The Evening News*. "Its plan resembles a bird with outstretched wings. The palace took four years to build. The Hyderabad State Budget provides for the expenditure of £48,700 for furnishing and decorating. Throughout the 24 reception rooms and 101 bed rooms Italian marble has been used. Tenders for decorating and furnishing the palace are now being considered from English and Indian firms. Despite the size of the palace it will not accommodate the Nizam's huge retinue." Needless to say the lesser Chiefs will not be slow to emulate His Exalted Highness.

Poverty and destitution encounter the eye of every discerning observer in and around Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi and other cities. A discriminating observer, by no means a globe-trotter, thus records his considered opinion : "India is to-day nothing but a poor beggar !" That is the verdict of a German author who enjoys an international reputation and who had been specially sent to oriental countries by an influential German newspaper, *Berliner Tageblatt*, "to report on the social and economic conditions of the people in the various Asiatic countries."

"Bernard Kellermann, for that is the name of the German author, has seen India as it is to-day. He has observed the most astonishing juxtaposition in the economic condition of India, extreme poverty and gorgeous riches, squalid huts and palatial buildings flourishing side by side. He has seen 'the Calcutta harbours with docks and forests of chimneys, the wonderful Howrah Bridge with traffic night and day with its thousand autos, lorries, buffalo-carts', but he has observed also



something more. Hidden behind all these splendours of 'British' India Bernard Kellermann has easily discovered 'the impoverished and humiliated India', and this he has characterised as 'true India.' But such was not certainly India when 'gold of Ormuz and Ind' lured the foreigners and induced them to fight one another to secure political and commercial supremacy in India. 'True India', even a century and a half ago, was the India whose riches exploited and carried to England brought about the industrial revolution in Britain and opened a new chapter in her economic and political history. To-day out of the 570 million pounds sterling invested in India, 470 millions on English railways, banks, electric power stations, tramways, water-works, mines, petroleum, rubber, coffee, tea—everything in one word three-fourths of all this is concentrated in English hands and the yield of the capital invested pours into the pockets of Englishmen abroad.' To safeguard the vested interests of foreign capitalists the 'Indian beggar' has to pay more than fifty crores of rupees as military expenditure and has to maintain the 'steel frame' Services. And when 'beggars' in India demand that they should have a voice in the administration of the affairs of their country, the representatives of vested interests quietly tell them that India is unfit for Self-Government because 'there are millions of beggars' in the country!'—*The Forward*, October 13, 1928.

## II—INDIA—A LAND OF CONTRAST.

"When the Prime Minister leaves Downing Street for a few weeks and shelters at Jossiemouth, there are complaints that the business of the country cannot properly be conducted by despatch and telegram and that such remoteness from the centre of affairs is bound to lead to inefficiency.

What would be said if the whole of Whitehall and the Cabinet, all the secretaries to secretaries, the Civil Service, except for a very junior handful, and endless truckloads of files and papers were solemnly transplanted in the wake of the Prime Minister, and established round about the Moray Firth for some seven or eight months?

For this is what happens in India—in fact what is happening now. The Government of India is moving to Simla and the Provincial Governments are moving to their respective hill-stations.

It is no use, just now, expecting an answer to an awkward question, or seeking higher guidance on a matter of delicate policy.

The correct answer is locked away in a great ant-proof metal box, carefully sealed and plastered with white paint blazoning the Department to which it belongs.

It is in charge of an imposing gilt and red clad 'chaprassi', who is shivering at the change of climate at the foot-hills, and who presently will fight with a host of other 'chaprasis' as they sort out the secrets of the British Raj and transfer them at Kalka junction to the narrow gauge railway which coils and winds and climbs through one hundred and one tunnels to the Olympian heights of Simla.

And even then—when the precious box is deposited in its hot weather home—it will be some time before the officials find where the appropriate file is; and meanwhile India must wait.

The theory is, of course, that it is too hot in the plains and in the Provincial capitals for the heaven-born to function properly. The curious thing is that the more senior you are in Government service the more does this apply. Juniors and subordinates (Anglo-Indians) and, of course, the Indian himself, get on all right. Bankers, box-wallahs and the odds and ends of commerce can, and do, sizzle in 115 degrees in the shade. Every Englishwoman (above a certain income) must go to the hills or home. Even the Army has its hill stations, and companions take it in turns to gaze on the snow-clad Himalayas.

These hill stations are a triumph of engineering and perseverance. Their height varies from 5,000 to 9,000 feet, and in some cases everything has to be carried up on the backs of asthmatic coolies.

The views are superb. The air exhilarating and the society charming. Hither gather the grass widows of India and the unmarried known as the 'fishing fleet'.

Hither fly the young officers on leave and the young civilians. The Princes have elaborate pied a terre and princelings abound. The Indian legislator brings his wife and emancipated daughters. The Viceroy entertains lavishly, mixing his guests judiciously . . . and all the time, away to the south, stretches the vast sub-continent, seething with unrest and discontent. A land of contrast; pomp here, poverty there.

India seems strangely remote in Simla. The Government conceals its iron hand in the most delicate of fawn gloves. Members of the Viceroy's Council do most of their business—pleasant and unpleasant—in their own bungalows.

Only occasionally along the Mall a ripple of doffed topees and a splash of feminine smiles will signify the passing of the rickshaw of the Truly Great. There he sits, cool and confident in a natty 'white' topee, pushed and pulled by his smartly uniformed coolies.

For only the Viceroy and the Commander-in-chief may use a motor-car in the hill capital. Gandhi refused to be propelled by his fellow human beings, and always walked.

And when the rains pour down and beat endless tatoos on the corrugated iron roofs, Simla is sometimes more remote than ever. Down come the wires, and the Governors of the country can mediate undisturbed by the intrusion of awkward facts.

#### *New Delhi.*

New Delhi—that colossal monument of bureaucratic waste—was built to house the Government of India—at a total cost of nearly £17,000,000.

There you find officials with rooms like tennis lawns and vast Lutyens vistas. All around are the winter homes of the bureaucracy, arranged according to salary. There is a five-thousand rupee avenue, a four-thousand rupee road, and so on.

This new Secretariat, already found too small, was to be the permanent home of the Central Government. After it was built, its walls were ripped out to instal hot and cold water control of temperature. But even that did not prevent the yearly exodus. For the greater part of the New Delhi is as deserted as any of the old cities that are scattered on that historic ridge.

The waste in money is, of course, terrific. Officials have to keep two houses, and transportation costs soar high. Delay in transacting business provides another source of waste.

Delhi is remote enough. Simla is another 24 hours away. The telegraph cannot fill the gap—it is still an eccentric factor in India.

And, on top of all this, is the widespread discontent and irritation which fills the country yearly as the people doing the work in the heat think about their directors in the cool.

#### *Twice a Year.*

Twice a year the Government is in transition; as it goes up and then down. Every morning now at Kalka, long, heavy trains disgorge hosts of children, ayahs, and memsahibs, who stride the platform possessively shouting instructions in grammarless vernacular to the host of servants, who know exactly what to do. The station is almost hidden with baggage.

Presently the little hill train is loaded up. The ayahs slyly look round and pull their blankets round them, for the wind comes straight off the eternal snows.

The children will soon be sick and frightened at the great precipices yawning at either side. The female side of the Raj takes stock of old and new faces. And another Simla season has begun.

Meanwhile, back somewhere, limping slowly towards the foot-hills, a burdened, often-hunted, now-hurrying goods train brings the files with the the right answers and the correct evasions.

Farther back some district official watches the baking plains and anxiously opens telegrams, seeking for guidance and help. And farther away still the India Office and the Secretary of State for India have the time of their lives with their private, personal and confidential telegrams to the Governor-General.

For he, poor man, is also moving, hovering perhaps at Dehra Dun, halfway towards his mountain home. He has probably only one member of his Council available—the rest are ‘touring’—that is, paying visits to pleasant, interesting and historical parts of India, in nice cool 7½ foot saloon carriages.

Even a Viceroy does not always know the answers. And it will be weeks before the boxes are unpacked, the papers sorted and the precedents found.

Multiply this state of affairs seven or eight times, and you have a tolerably accurate picture of Indian Government twice a year.”—Frederick Atherton : *Daily Herald*.

### III.—SALARIES IN INDIA AND ELSEWHERE.

This is not the place to review the present policy of our Government. The one outstanding feature is that in its scheme the dumb, voiceless masses, who are the real contributors of the revenue, bulk nowhere. It is a scramble for the division of the spoils. The Prime Minister of England gets £5,000 a year and his colleagues from £5,000 to £2,000.<sup>\*</sup> In the United States the salary of a Cabinet Minister is not more than 12,000 dollars (*i.e.*, Rs. 36,000 approximately) while the Japanese

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<sup>\*</sup> Cf. “I was a much poorer man when I left office than when I entered. The office of Prime Minister, if it is to be properly discharged, cannot I think, be discharged, unless a man has private means of his own, on a salary of £5,000 a year. He has a number of duties, if he is to perform his office properly, of entertaining and affording hospitality to all sorts and conditions of people, both at home and abroad, which, under the existing arrangement, he has to defray entirely at his own cost.”—Oxford and Asquith : *Fifty Years of Parliament*, ii, p. 202.

The Prime Minister of England on account of the heavy strain on his purse has recently been allowed an additional £2,000; but his colleagues have to be contented with their present emoluments. Moreover, in England a much heavier income tax has to be paid and the *actual* salary is thus considerably reduced.

Prime Minister is allowed 12,000 yen annually and cabinet ministers 8,000 each. Formerly one Lt. Governor was sufficient for the provinces of Bengal (including Assam), Behar and Orissa. Now three separate provinces have been carved out. The bureaucracy knows well how to set the ball rolling. A few noisy selfish place-hunters are taken under its wings ; these set up a cry "Assam for the Assamese", "Burma for the Burmans", "Orissa for the Orias", and so on. Half a dozen grasshoppers create a great noise while, as Burke says, the stately bull browsing under the giant oak keeps quiet.<sup>9</sup> It is argued in justification of the creation of the new province that the area is vast and unwieldy and therefore the out-lying provinces receive but scant attention ; moreover, whenever any local disturbances arise it is difficult to control them from a centre removed far off. It is however conveniently ignored that the means of communication by railway and steamers have practically abridged distance ; there is scarcely any head-quarter of a province which cannot be reached within 12 hours. Again, the latest developments in wireless telegraphy and aviation have reduced political dangers to a minimum. The fact is that the bureaucracy is ever on the alert for increase of posts and emoluments. There are now in Bengal alone four Executive Councillors and three Ministers—seven in all, each with a retinue of large and costly staffs—each drawing Rs. 64,000 a year, i.e. approximately the pay of the Prime Minister of England. The Commercial Editor of the *Ananda Bazar Patrika* estimates that the cost of general administration in the provinces and in the centre has risen from about 4 crores of rupees in 1920 to about 14 crores in 1930-31. Under the white paper scheme it will rise to 25 crores.

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<sup>9</sup> As shown elsewhere the Government estimate is always low :

"If you look at the figures, connected with the setting up of Provincial Autonomy, Sir Malcolm Hailey comes to a general conclusion that the expenditure involved, may be something between Rs. 6 and 8 crores. My Lord Chairman, that looks a very formidable figure ; but let me pass from the provinces to the Federal Centre. I think you will find that the expenditure for the Federal Centre is a figure of about 2½ crores."—Sir Samuel Hoare at the Third Round Table Conference.

New posts have been created *ad libitum*. Formerly one Director of Public Instruction was quite enough for the whole of Bengal. Now there is the Education Minister with his costly paraphernalia, including a Civilian Secretary drawing a fat salary. The Director of Public Instruction again has got three assistant Directors and a Personal Assistant. The Commissioners of Divisions drawing Rs. 3,000 per month plus Rs. 250 as allowance have absolutely nothing to do ; they are simply "post offices" or conduit pipes for keeping the district Magistrates and Collectors in communication with the Executive Councillors and Ministers as also the Board of Revenue. The Inspector General of Police is assisted by six Deputy Inspectors. In fact posts have of late years, especially since the inauguration of the "Montford" reforms, been recklessly multiplied both in the Provincial and Imperial branches, and many new departments have sprung into existence, which are so many nests of sinecurists.<sup>10</sup>

Diarchy has been pronounced to be not only a costly affair but a failure ; even the moderates, who were at one time jubilant and accepted office with high expectations, have found it unworkable and have not hesitated to pronounce their funeral dirge over it. Men with a spark of patriotism have fought shy of it. But successive Governors of Bengal as also of other provinces are determined not to feel the national pulse, with the result that third rate men, who could not earn in their profession even Rs. 250 a month and who are ready to sell their birthright for the proverbial mess of pottage, have jumped to have a bite at these sops to the Cerberus. Some of the Bengal landlords—noodles and nincompoops, and thus

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. "Thirty years ago when I was a member of the Bengal Council, I remember that the cost of administration of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa did not exceed five to six crores. Since Bihar and Orissa were separated from Bengal, the cost of administration of Bengal alone has been progressively increased to 11 to 12 crores of rupees. And for all that, have our education, sanitation, public health, and economic condition improved at all? I think that public opinion is agreed that the answer is an emphatic No."—J. Chaudhuri ; *Presidential Address, Calcutta Teachers' Conference, 1934.*

mere tools in the hands of their civilian secretaries—have also been induced to accept office. The Governor of Bengal has evidently taken it into his head that by setting up these puppets he proves to demonstration that diarchy is a success and has thus put a premium on prostitution of public life to which pointed reference has been made elsewhere (p. 122). The mischief, however, does not end here ; since the increase of the emoluments of the civil and medical services by means of what has come to be known as the "Lee loot", the pay of the provincial executive and judicial services has been correspondingly increased so as to rob the Indians of the cry that it is only the *while* service which has been pampered. The poison has since then spread from the central to the peripheral regions. The I.C.S. and I.M.S. as being privileged have brought into existence another class of semi-privileged service, namely the I.E.S.<sup>11</sup> The members thereof also claim higher pay on the ground that judged by the intellectual attainments they are often of superior merit. Even among the Indians the cry is like that of the horse-leech's daughter: "*Give me more*". One who gets Rs. 250 per month grumbles and envies the man with Rs. 500, the Rs. 500 man hankers after Rs. 750, the latter again thinks that he is a victim of gross injustice in that his academic qualifications are superior to the drawer of Rs. 1000 per month, who in his turn sees no reason why he should not get a lift to Rs. 1,250 and so on. I leave out of consideration the several other branches of public services, *e.g.*, the Police, the Forest, the Agriculture etc. The whole arrangement looks like the division of spoils by brigands in the wood. There is demoralisation all along the line as there is again a competition between the Hindu and the Moslem, between the high-caste office-seekers and those belonging to the so-called depressed classes. Of course, the

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<sup>11</sup> *i.e.*, The Indian Educational Service.

As the Educational Service is now a 'transferred' service, *i.e.*, belonging to the Provinces, it is now designated according to the Provinces it belongs to. Thus B. E. S. is Bengal Educational Service.

claims of the dumb millions of peasants, the real producers of wealth, are coolly ignored and it is conveniently forgotten that the average income of an Indian is only £3 a year and that the maximum *monthly* pay in Soviet Russia is £22.

While revising this portion of the MS. for the press, I came across the diagnosis of the basic cause of discontent by an Englishman, who has evidently been watching the situation with a keen eye. An English friend writes:

"Seldom does it happen that the *Statesman* allows any statement to appear in its columns which can be interpreted as accusing the present form of Government in this country as being in any way responsible for the existing discontent. It was a surprise to me therefore to see in its columns recently a letter from an anonymous correspondent in which the true cause of discontent is recognised and plainly stated as follows :—

'The economic distress in the country is mainly due to the world-wide trade depression and acts of God over which human agencies have no control, and, on the top of that, sitting like an incubus, grinding and ever-increasing taxation. This huge taxation is resorted to to maintain a top-heavy administration for which this country has no need. Bengal, Behar and Orissa used to be governed—and governed well—by one Lieutenant-Governor with a few Secretaries and a small Legislative Council. In their place we have two Governors, any number of Executive Councillors, Ministers and Secretaries and two large Legislative Councils with their establishments, their Council Houses, the allowances of their members and so on and so forth, all costing mints and mints of money crushed out of the poor tax-payer. And what does the latter get in exchange? Better administration? No. More peace and content? Certainly not. He gets the proverbial "Horse's Egg." The Legislative Councils only afford opportunities to some showy people to spout forth for the benefit of some other admiring followers and to attempt to prove how clever they are and how they toil for the good of the country.'

"The defect of the British form of Government in this country is that it makes only for the welfare and prosperity of the few, while that of the mass of the people is comparatively disregarded. Those Indians who are taken on into the administration in its upper grades, whether civil or military, are extravagantly paid by reason of the example that the scale of salaries paid to Britishers sets, and the consequence is a form of Government costing at least four times what it should do, and principally benefitting, so far as Indians are concerned, not 5 per cent.



of their number; for it is a fact that such advantages as they get from the present form of administration could be and should be obtained at one-fourth the cost.<sup>12</sup>

"The mass of the people have now been educated up to recognizing this anomaly and are insistent that it shall no longer continue. If the Congress has been the educator, it has done a good work in taking the first step necessary for the removal of this wrong. In the trades union organisations and other federations of labour are to be seen evidence of only the beginning of the means which the people will gradually call into being for the removal of this basic cause of their discontent."—*The A. B. Patrika*, Aug. 30, 1931.

Anent this aspect of extravagance a well-informed writer in the *Statesman* (March 2, 1934) very appropriately observes:

"In asking the Central Legislature to take the case of Bengal into its special consideration, Sir George Schuster has laid down a special condition and that is that the Government and the legislature of Bengal will do all that may be found possible to help themselves and he concluded with the following significant words: 'Everything which I have to propose (for Bengal) is subject to this condition.' The question will therefore naturally arise if the Government and Legislature of Bengal are doing all that can be done to help themselves. The exact position in this connexion cannot be explained briefly yet it can be said safely that the legislature of Bengal did all it could but the Government did not. Two successive committees appointed at the instance of the Bengal Legislative Council to find out ways and means for retrenchment, recommended the curtailment of over two crores of rupees in the expenditure but the Government of Bengal has not seen its way to retrench even a quarter of the amount. The Swan Committee thought that the size of the Cabinet of the Governor

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<sup>12</sup> "It may be mentioned that the salaries of the Malaya Civilians, as those in Ceylon, are much lower than those paid to members of the Indian Civil Service and yet these Civilians work with same zeal and loyalty as do members of the Indian Civil Service. Probably they do not know how to combine and agitate for higher salaries or other allowances, or perhaps they know that the Colonial Secretary is not half as generous as the Secretary of State for India is with Indian revenues."—Sir Lalubhai Samaldas: *My Impressions of Japan*.

could be reduced but the Government has decided that 'no action will be taken to reduce the size or the emoluments of the Cabinet pending the introduction of the new reforms.' As to the question of Hill exodus, the Government think that 'in these abnormal times when urgent matters which require the attention of the Government as a whole are so numerous it is not possible to abandon the second visit to Darjeeling.' Further 'it has been decided to make no reduction in the number of secretaries,' and 'no reduction in the number of Divisional Commissioners is considered practicable in the present condition.' So forth and so on. It is for the Government of India and the rest of the world to judge if the Government of Bengal is helping itself although the lines on which such help can be secured have been indicated by the Legislature of Bengal."

Recently we read that Herr Hitler refused to accept any pay or remuneration for his arduous duties as Chancellor; he said that what he earned by writing books or contributing articles was enough for him. But our rapacious and greedy place-hunters set their face against the retrenchment recommendations as thereby their own exorbitant salaries will have to be cut down. The following statement on Italian economics may be presented as a glaring contrast.

"The Cabinet has approved of economies totalling 397,000,000 lire. This is the third of a series of measures which Signor Mussolini initiated towards reducing the 2,900,000,000 lire deficit for the year 1934-35.

"The first measure in January effected a saving of 900,000,000 lire through a conversion operation. The second measure of April saved 410,000,000 lire by cuts in State employees' salaries. The third measure will result in the ruthless combing out of possible economies in all Ministries."—*Reuter* (June 30, 1934.)<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> In Italy there is no waste and extravagance and no princely pay of Civil and Military servants and the interests of the rulers and the ruled are identical; hence root-and-branch curtailment of expenditure possible.

*Cf.* "In the midst of all this trouble, which had looked like wrecking

## IV—PRINCELY EXTRAVAGANCE.

As I am sending this portion to the press, by a curious coincidence, I come across a remarkable delineation of the orgy of extravagance from an unexpected source—this time an Indian native prince.

The Rajputana Correspondent to the *Roy's Weekly* writes from Mt. Abu under date May 15, 1934 :

"Well, you are face to face with a brute, a leper, an assassin—one who fleeces his subjects, tortures his prisoners, drives into his zenana all the lucky girls in his territory and forcibly sends for other people's wives—."

It is characteristic of His Highness that he seldom greets me without such outburst.

Then we came to grips with the subject of princely extravagance. His Highness emphasised the theory to which he is almost wedded, that the Indian Princes are but imitating the Ruling Power, that the moment the Rulers become Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru they will go in for loin cloth and the grass mat and "Chapatti" and 'dal' a day, just as, when the Muslim Emperors ruled they put their women in 'purdah', changed their 'dhoties' into Pyjamas and installed the tailor as a citizen because they wanted 'achkans.' "Have you seen the picture of Shri Ramchandra—in his 'dhoti' and with no shirt or turban on? These are all our homage to Muslim civilization—and our new palaces in which John Tinson of Delhi have installed sanitary fittings are all our homage to British Rule."

That is the simple way with the Maharajah Saheb, who is one of the best of men not because he is friendly to humble me in spite of all his pomp and power, but I have seldom talked with him without profiting myself.

"Been at any time in summer in New Delhi—Raisina—?" the Maharaja asked me. I said that though I had not been there in summer,

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Fascist stabilisation, a very remarkable piece of news was published. It was announced that the National Budget had not only been balanced, but that there was a surplus. At the time of the March on Rome (Oct. 1922) the Budget deficit was 15,760 million lire. In one year of reform that deficit was reduced to 3,028 million lire; by 1923-1924 the deficit had shrunk to 419 million lire. The 1924-1925 balance showed a surplus of 147 million lire. This apparent miracle was performed by Finance Minister, De Stefani, one of the most remarkable men in Mussolini's movement."—Ion S. Munro: *Through Fascism to World Power*.

I had a picture of the place from what the *Roy's Weekly* wrote : foxes running about in broad daylight where before live M. L. A.'s breathed fire and brimstone.

"Yes, but because M. L. A.'s have a hand in the pie, so that is not a crime—to waste crores and crores of rupees in the change of capital when that amount could have been used for lifting the agriculturists from the weight of agricultural indebtedness. You see, what you do is always just and natural and actuated by the best of motives; what your neighbour does is all wrong and mean and selfish."

And then we talked about the waste that is going on in the Government of India.

"Sir George Schuster can spend sixteen lakhs on a banking enquiry committee and there is not a whisper, simply, because Tom and Swampy are members and get allowance—but if I should go to London and spend a few lakhs, why, I am drinking the blood of my ryots! Who paid for these pleasure trips of the members of the committee to England? The prosperous civilian or the millionaire textile machinery owners? It is the half-starving, skeleton-looking, ghost-like agriculturist haunting the paddy field in British India. Remember that."

"We forget the origin of our argumentation—", he began with a smile, "and that is that whereas you are quiet if only you, politicians, are allowed to spend the poor agriculturist's money yourself, in company with the Englishmen, you are not prepared to allow to me the same failing or the same privilege, whatever you call it. You all write and speak against the Government exodus to the hills, but are anxious to proceed to Simla for the sittings of the Assembly. And you have no compunction to paying a nominal rent to your excellent house, built out of the blood of the agriculturists, whereas the poor clerk pay more than his percentage of the income for his miserable hut in some 'khud.' And the agriculturist himself, like Christ, has no place to put his head in. And yet if I build a palace which does not cost my ten years' revenue as New Delhi has cost, you must raise a hue and cry."

The high salaries of the members of the services—both Indian and European in a country where half the population lives on the verge of starvation, may with evident justification be contrasted with the conditions prevailing in other oriental countries.

"At none of the big Tokyo newspaper offices which I regularly visit have I ever found an editor or sub-editor absent except on duty, while the professors at schools and universities work for unbroken spells of seven hours daily, after which they often take extra classes. Neither do these men receive salaries larger in proportion to those of

manual labourers. A Japanese colonel is paid under Yen<sup>14</sup> 400 a month, a professor is lucky if he gets Yen 200, the salaries of government civil servants are ridiculously small. I was once talking to a clerk in the South Sea Islands administration, not a man in a high executive position but still one who had been through school and university, spoke fluent English and was married, who told me proudly that he was receiving Yen 110 monthly, for which wage he had to live in a bad tropical climate and often work after dinner."—*Labour and Wage Conditions in Japan To-day* by R. V. C. Bodley, reproduced in the *Statesman*, Feb. 25, 1934.

In the Universities of France, professors of high distinction have to be contented with remuneration not exceeding often times Rs. 500. China, since the Republican Government was set up in 1911, has been torn asunder by internal strife. All the sources of revenue are commandeered now by one war-lord and now by another, with the result that little or no money is available for educational purposes. But the students (see p. 118) and the professors have shown unique examples of self-abnegation. Let me cite one instance.

"There is a tremendous vitality in a people which can produce men of the types of the Chinese university professors of Peking who, when their salaries had not been paid for twenty-six months, continued teaching in the class rooms daily, and at night, in order to earn a meagre living, blackened their faces as a disguise and pulled rickshas in the cold windy streets in order to earn enough money with which to buy food."—Abend: *Tortured China*, p. 285.

The results of this extravagance—military and civil—in the Government of India are now patent to everybody. Sir John Megaw, late Director-General of the Medical Services of India, stated recently that only 40% of the people of India are able to obtain proper nourishing food. Debt has been piled upon debt like Pelion upon Ossa, until to-day the national debt stands at Rs. 1,200 crores approximately. No doubt some part of this debt has been used for productive purposes, e.g., the construction of railways and canals. But here too, the interests of India have often been sacrificed for imperial purposes.

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<sup>14</sup> 100 Yens=Rs. 76 at the current rate of exchange.

An account of discussion in connection with what is known as the "Waggon Scandal" in the Legislative Assembly at Delhi will be found illuminating.

"It was a day of heart burning for the Government in the Legislative Assembly, I may well say—a day of mourning. On the very first day of voting on the demand of budget grants on Railways the non-officials inflicted their first serious and telling defeat on the Government. The entire demand for the Railway Board was voted out by 59 against 52 on the motion of Mr. S. Srinivasa Iyengar. The Congress President appeared in his old familiar roll of a prosecutor. The only difference was that whereas in the old days he indicted public men on behalf of the Government, he now indicted the Government on behalf of the public. To my mind it was a marvellous performance. As Mr. Iyengar was developing his case against the Railway Board and their almost proverbial irresponsibility, the officials of the board including Sir Clement Hindley went purple with uncontrollable rage. To add fuel to the fire, Pandit Motilal Nehru in his characteristic style of crushing sarcasm reminded Sir Clement Hindley how easily he had played with India's capital although he had known pretty well that the thirty thousand waggons he had purchased from England were not needed in India.

"A little later, Dr. Gour in a vehement speech explained the motive behind the scandalous purchase. Was it not unemployment time in England?—He asked. And the Government, he added, were out to relieve distress of British unemployment. Pandit Motilal also said that this step-motherly treatment accorded to Indian waggon industry had well-nigh landed it in disaster. . . . 'You have squandered away 15 crores of public money and have killed the home industry in order to support the British industry.'

"Lala Lajpat Rai said: 'The railways in India had in view the interests of foreign trade, European merchants and, European and Anglo-Indian employees.'"—Feb. 23, 1927.

Needless to add that although the Government was defeated, the Viceroy by his power of certification carried his point. This is why the Assembly has come to be looked upon as a mock Parliament and puppet show.

#### V—PUBLIC DEBT OF INDIA.

The manner in which a large portion of the unproductive debt has been saddled on the poor people of India forms one of the meanest chapters of the history of British rule in India. Facts have recently been brought to light which are worthy of careful consideration in this connection.

The Congress Select Committee, appointed by the Karachi Congress to scrutinise the report on the financial obligations between Great Britain and India, make the following unanimous recommendations :

"The present 'Public Debt' of India amounts to over Rs. 1100 crores. Taking into consideration the ever growing material and political gain to Great Britain as the result of possessing India, and in consideration of the suppression of Indian industries and talents, the Committee recommend that Great Britain should follow in dealing with India the precedent she set in releasing Ireland of her share to the National debt of the United Kingdom when Ireland was made a free State. Every principle of fair play now requires that if India is to start on a new era of National Self-Government, it should start freely and without any burden ; if any progress is to be achieved at all India cannot afford to bear any additional taxation. The only possibilities of progress for India therefore are the application of the national revenue to national purposes, and it is only by reducing the national expenditure on the civil and military administration of the country to suit its own requirements and free India from the liabilities for the public debts not incurred in her interests, that saving can be effected which could be applicable to the advancement of India in the matter of education and sanitation and other national means of regeneration."

"As regards the European War (1914-1918), claims under two heads are made:—(1) The return of the War 'Gifts' and (2) a share of the War Cost. The first claim amounting to Rs. 189 crores is made on two grounds:—

(a) That the Government of India, under the Statutes by which it is regulated had no power, whatsoever, to make a gift to Great Britain out of the revenues of India, and therefore the 'Gifts', being illegal transactions, should be returned.

(b) The amount was beyond the financial ability of the people of India and that India had contributed, apart from these financial 'Gifts', by way of men and material far in excess of the contribution of any of the Dominions (*cf.* Vol. I. p. 232),

The second claim in respect of part of the cost of the military operations amounts to Rs. 171 crores. This is arrived at by adopting as standard military expenditure the amount spent in the year 1914-15, and the excess over such standard between 1915-16 and 1920-21 is claimed.

Thus, under this head of 'External Wars', a claim of over Rs. 397 crores is made.

It is also pointed out that the 'public debt' in India is not a national debt, (for it is the result of acts of representatives of the British nation) as India had not even the 'shadow of a constitution.' "

The total claims are as follows :

*Under the East India Company—*

External Wars	...	...	Rs. 35 crores.
Capital & Interest	...	...	37 "
Cost of the Mutiny	...	...	40 "

*Under the British Crown—*

External Wars	...	...	...	37	„
European War Gifts	...	...	...	189	„
European War Costs	...	...	...	171	„
Miscellaneous Charges	...	...	...	20	„
Burma	...	...	...	82	„
Reverse Council Losses	...	...	...	35	„
Railways	...	...	...	83	„

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Grand Total    Rs. 729 crores.

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The entire cost of suppressing the Indian Mutiny was thrown upon India, though it was a mutiny and the people at large not only took no part in it but helped the Government in every way. Contrast with this treatment the Boer War :

"The present Government of the Transvaal is in the hands of the Boer party. 'The opinion of the British Government and the opinion of the British people must not be allowed to lead to any interference with a self-governing Colony.' So that, having expended in the conquest of the Transvaal, a greater sum than Germany exacted from France at the



close of the Franco-Prussian War, 250 millions of sterling, Great Britain is unable to enforce upon the conquered people one of the very principles which the war was fought to vindicate."—Norman Angell: *The Great Illusion*.

Thus of the public debt of India amounting to 1,210 crores of rupees, a claim for 729 crores has been lodged against Great Britain.

## VI—INCOME OF AGRICULTURISTS.

### G. D. BIRLA ON THE INCOME OF THE AGRICULTURISTS IN INDIA.

"It may be said that on the whole, agricultural production is more or less stationary. On the other hand as a result of the fall in prices, the agriculturist's income has been very much reduced and charges represented by land revenue, interest, etc., being fixed, the margin on his profit has more or less disappeared. And the worst of it is that there has been a heavier fall in the prices in which he is interested as numbers show that the fall has been in the ratio of 47 : 22.<sup>18</sup> The agriculturist has thus suffered on three fronts. He has been hit firstly, by the precipitous fall in the prices of the commodities which he sells; secondly, by the rigidity of some of the items on the expenditure side of his budget, and thirdly, by the incident that the prices of commodities which he consumes, have not fallen to the same extent as the prices of the commodities which he produces. His plight therefore is most severe.

"While in normal years India used to absorb precious metals worth Re. 1 per head of the population, in 1932-33 she sold out Re. 1-14-0 worth of gold per head. This may give us some idea of the balance sheet of the masses. A gap of Rs. 3 per head could be seen in transactions relating to precious metals alone. Other economies in expenditure on travelling, kerosene, postcards and other items have been made. Does it mean that calculated in real wealth, the average income of the people is down by Rs. 4 per head as compared with 1929? Rs. 4 per head looks a paltry sum but it is a big thing for a poor country like India.

"The present supply of grains and cereals comes to about 9½ chatacks per capita per day. If we take away from it the quantity required for seeds and cattle and also make allowance for wastage, etc., barely ½ seer per head per day would be available for human consumption."

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<sup>18</sup> 1929-30. and 1930-32.

Mr. D. P. Khaitan has tried to give an idea of the disastrous fall in the income of the agricultural classes of Bengal :

"Agriculturists form the bulk of our population. Owing to the tremendous fall in the prices of agricultural commodities, they have not been able to pay their rent, cess and interest on loans. So the Zemindars, too, have suffered. Due to adversity among their clients and customers, the professional and mercantile classes have necessarily suffered miserably.

"If we statistically investigate the position, we find that after deducting the quantity of food grains consumed by the agricultural classes the annual average harvest value of the crops in Bengal in the decade 1920-22 to 1922-30 was about Rs. 72 crores. The monetary liabilities of the agriculturists for rent, cess and interest amounted to about Rs. 28 crores. They had thus a free purchasing power of about Rs. 44 crores per annum.

"In the year 1932-33, the harvest value of such crops in Bengal fell to about Rs. 32 crores. The fixed monetary liabilities of the agriculturists continued to be the same as before, *viz.*, about Rs. 28 crores. It is obvious that if the agricultural classes that constitute 77·8 per cent. of the population paid their liabilities, they would be left without any purchasing power whatsoever. In such circumstances, it is not difficult to understand why the economic position of all classes of the people in Bengal is as bad as we find it."

#### VII—LANDLORDS AND 'TENANTS' DISTRESS.

It will thus be seen that the fall in price of agricultural produces for the whole of India has been tremendous ; while for Bengal it is still higher. Jute is the only "money" crop in Bengal. As the *Statesman* puts it, for every Rs. 100 which the ryot used to get in 1929-30, he now gets only Rs. 20, *i.e.*, *one-fifth* of the sum. No wonder that his back is broken and he is unable to bear any more burden. His distress has aggravated the distress of the landlord and the professional man.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, as he has lost his purchasing power, trade in every shape has suffered correspondingly and yet the Government Shylock-

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<sup>16</sup> How the low price of jute has affected the material condition of the people is borne out by the Government of Bengal's resolution on the report of the Board of Revenue on the land revenue administration of the province for the year 1933-34. "The material condition of the people

like exacts its uttermost farthing. This will explain the sale of Zemindaries as also the ryots' holdings as a glance at the daily papers will show. I cull from the daily papers only two or three days' sale proceedings.

Faridpur, June 24/34.

About 200 estates were advertised for sale for default in payment of Government revenue for the March kist.

Barisal, Aug., 13/34.

On account of default in respect of payment of Government revenue due to the last June kist, as many as 222 permanently settled estates have been advertised for sale, while among the Khas Mahal tenures that failed to pay the Government revenue due for the last March kist, 352 have now been advertised for sale. The sales will come off on the 24th September next.—*United Press*.

Chittagong, April 21/33.

Nearly 20,000 rent suits were instituted on the 'tamadi' day in Chittagong Sadar and the outlying 'chowkis' in the district. It is reported that the number has exceeded that of the previous year by a few hundred.

Rungpore, April 21/33.

More than 7,000 rent suits were instituted in the local civil courts on the 'tamadi' day; almost all the plaints having been filed with deficit court fees. The number is the highest for the last 25 years.

Purulia, April 20/34.

360 'Mouzas' (Taluks) have been advertised for sale here and nearly 2700 rent suits have been filed.—*United Press*.

Natore, April 20/34.

Nearly 2600 'Tamadi' suits have been filed here this year, which is showing considerable increase than the previous year.—*United Press*.

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was no better than in the previous year. Though the price of paddy and rice showed some slight rise in the latter part of the year, this did not appreciably improve their condition, in the absence of a rise in the price of jute, which is essentially the money crop of the province."

Chittagong, April 20/34.

5500 'tamadi' rent suits were filed in the Sadar Central Court, Chittagong, on the 'Tamadi' day, that is, the Bengali new year's day. It is learnt that about equal number of suits have been filed at Patiya. Figures from five other Munsiff chowkis in the interior have not yet been obtained.—*United Press*.

Comilla, April 21/34.

More than fifteen thousand 'Tamadi' suits including more than fourteen thousand rent suits were filed this year as against fourteen thousand last year.

Most of them have been filed with deficit court fees.—*United Press*.

Tamluk, April 30/34.

On the last 'Tamadi' day as many as 3300 rent suits have been filed at the Tamluk Munsiff Court. This represents an increase of about 300 over the last year's number of suits and points to the increased inability of the tenants to pay off their rents.—*United Press*.

The ryots' economic distress is not confined to permanently settled Bengal but is more or less equally keen in other provinces.

Officials are still boasting of India's credit in the world market. Do they realise at what cost this credit is being maintained? The late Sir Sankaran Nair, who is certainly not a panic-monger, said recently at Calicut that the havoc wrought by the enhancement of the taxes was appalling. This is true not only of Malabar but of all parts of India. Officials know nothing of the country if they do not know this. The fact is that in all these years of distress, the Government have cared only for the balancing of the budget. The ryot has suffered not a little for this obsession of the Government.

Sir Lalubhai Samaldas very pertinently remarks: "I cannot help re-iterating what I have often said before elsewhere that a large portion of the income collected from the ryots should go to them through the nation-building departments."

Bengal potentially is one of the richest Indian provinces, with her gross revenue of over Rs. 37 crores as against Rs. 25 crores of Madras, Rs. 15½ crores of U. P., or only Rs. 12 crores of the Punjab. It is the excessive and extortionate demands of the

Central Government that drain Bengal of her resources and leave her the poorest and the weakest in the acute struggle for existence amongst individuals and peoples. Already the iniquitous Meston Award leaves to Bengal a residual revenue of about Rs. 10 crores to cater for the needs of nearly 50 millions of Bengalis, while Bombay is given Rs. 15 crores for 20 millions of her people, Madras Rs. 17½ crores for 42 millions and the Punjab Rs. 11 crores for 20 millions. This means that the state spends on the Madrasi over Rs. 4/- per head per year, Rs. 7¼ on the Bombayite, Rs. 5½ on the Punjabi, and on the Bengali only Rs. 2/-. No wonder that the Bengali is steadily going to the wall under the unfair dispensation and losing the race against the Madrasi or the Punjabi.

This explains why India as a whole on account of the economic distress has been under the necessity of parting with Rs. 200 crores worth of "distress" gold to meet her requirements. Reference has been made above by Mr. Birla (p. 204) to this sad episode.

#### VIII—BRITISH INVESTMENTS IN INDIA—INTEREST PAYABLE.

Sir M. Visvesvaraya's *Planned Economy for India* just to hand (Dec. 17, 1934) gives the revenue *per capita* of India less than Rs. 10 ; while that for Japan is Rs. 76, for the U. S. (America), Rs. 222 ; Canada, Rs. 197 and the United Kingdom, Rs. 290. (*l. c.* p. 170).

The obligations of this country to pay interests to Great Britain at the average rate of 5 per cent. on the capital invested in Indian enterprises (Rs. 1,300 crores), would thus amount to about £50 millions or roughly Rs. 65 crores annually (*l. c.* p. 175). This is exclusive of official remittances to England for pensions and other Home charges. (*l. c.* p. 177).

The *per capita* income of the agriculturists in India is estimated at Rs. 50 ; this will enable the reader to realize their difficulty in meeting the heavy burdens imposed on them.

Mr. G. D. Birla from figures taken from *Ain-i-Akbari* shows that, on the average, living for the common people is

about four times dearer now than it was in Akbar's time ; on the other hand, money wages are about four times higher to-day than they were in 1600. In other words, the worker in real wages is getting to-day about the same amount as he was getting more than three hundred years ago. This conclusion is borne out by Moreland, in his *India at the Death of Akbar*.

There is another important feature in connection with pre-British days, which is apt to be ignored. A considerable part of the revenues was paid in kind, i.e., a fixed quota on the produce of the land. But the British Government must have cash money to pay the civil and military service men and for home remittances. Hence the sun-set law was set in force. No matter what the produce of land fetches, you must pay the fixed cash revenue. Hence during the last few years, depression and slump the peasantry and along with them the landholders, the money lenders, the traders and lawyers have been hard hit. This explains why so many holdings are for sale.

#### IX—A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE BUDGET OF BENGAL, GOVERNMENT FOR 1934-35.

Total revenue available=Rs. 11 crores and 30 lakhs.<sup>17</sup> The amount sanctioned for irrigation, education, health, agriculture and industry=Rs. 2 crores 50 lakhs. This reads fairly well on paper ; but if one takes the trouble to go carefully into the actual amount spent for what is called the nation-building purposes, he will be sadly disappointed. In fact most part of the budgetted amount is practically ear-marked for the bloated pay of the departmental heads, officers and their allowances.

Let me take for instance the Department of Agriculture, which includes veterinary and co-operative as its branches.

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<sup>17</sup> The revenue is really Rs. 9,07,47,000. The balance is met by advance from the Central Government to the extent of Rs. 2,32,32,000. Bengal is going on with a deficit budget.

The total amount budgetted for the department is 23 lakhs and 80 thousand rupees, which will be spent as follows :—

Agriculture	...	...	Rs. 1,076,000
Veterinary	...	...	„ 477,000
Co-operative credit, etc.	...	...	„ 819,000
House to be constructed	...	...	„ 7,000
Purchases abroad	...	...	„ 1,000

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Rs. 2,380,000

Now let us analyse the amount ear-marked for agriculture, namely Rs. 1,076,000.

Pay of officers	...	...	Rs. 234,884
„ „ ministerialists and establish-			
ment, etc.	...	...	„ 371,502
Allowance, honoraria, etc.	...	...	„ 94,778

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Rs. 701,164

It is thus evident that out of Rs. 1,076,000 more than Rs. 700,000 is consumed by officers' pay and allowance etc. On a careful analysis of the other items it is found that for the purchase of implements, improved live-stock etc., only 1 lakh of rupees is to be spent. For agricultural research, for propaganda, for the sale of agricultural products and so on there is very little left.

The amount for the co-operative branch is Rs. 819,000, out of which pay of officers=Rs. 67,920, pay of subordinate staff=Rs. 516,900 ; for *bhatta* etc.=Rs. 143,000. Whereas for five land-mortgage banks Rs. 40,000 only has been sanctioned.

It would thus appear that the top-heavy system of administration swallows up the main expenditure. Bengal is pre-eminently an agricultural country. The indebtedness of the peasants has been calculated at one hundred crores. The slump extending over the last four years has added materially to his debt and it is now put down by experts at no less than Rs. 125 crores. The Government can only spare Rs. 40,000 for

giving relief to the heavily indebted ryot in the shape of contributions to the land-mortgage banks!

One has not the patience to go through the other departments ; but they all tell the same tale.

The "nation-building" departments are a mere eye-wash and deceive no one.

Let us now have a glance at the Department of Industry. The budgetted amount is Rs. 12,21,000 out of which—

Pay of the officers	...	...	Rs. 200,000
„ „ ministerialists	...	...	„ 200,000
Bhatta etc.	...	...	„ 23,000

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Rs. 423,000

in other words, nearly one-third of the amount goes for the upkeep of the department. Rs. 418,000 has been ear-marked for industry proper ; while for the quinine factory (see p. 144) Rs. 353,000 has been allotted, and for the help of small industries the amount budgetted is one lakh of rupees, which is almost a negligible quantity considering the needs of this vast province.

I am myself connected with several industries struggling hard for the last decade or so ; it is by the utmost sacrifice of the shareholders and the managing directors that they have been kept alive, though some of them are almost gasping for very existence. The Department of Industries has been approached for help in the shape of easy loans. But the stereotyped reply is "*no funds available.*"

Then again the amount ear-marked for police is Rs. 2 crores and 25 lakhs (approximately), *i.e.*, nearly one-fourth of the real revenue.

For education we have

Under Reserve	...	...	Rs. 1,231,000
„ Transferred	...	...	„ 11,671,000

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Rs. 12,902,000



in other words, for a handful of Europeans and Anglo-Indians Rs. 1,231,000 and for 5 millions of people the amount given is only Rs. 1 crore and 17 lakhs or one-eighth of the real available revenue. I have already pointed out that a good slice of this again is enjoyed by the higher officers and the inspecting staff (see p. 80). So very little can be spared for education proper.

Let us represent Bengal as a helpless widow with an income of Rs. 100 ; out of this two-thirds is snatched away by the Central Government for giving her protection from the *external* enemy ; of the remaining one-third again, *i.e.* Rs. 33, the police takes away nearly one-fourth, or Rs. 8 for giving her *internal* protection, *i.e.* protection from robbers, thieves etc. She has only Rs. 25 left for her own support, including education of her children, sanitation etc. I have just shown by a rough analysis of the budget how the latter amount is spent.

The way in which the amount budgetted for "travelling allowances" is spent is altogether amazing. One would not have the least grievance if the money was well-spent in the true interests of the cultivators. The tour diaries and the travelling allowance bills of any of the superior officers of the department will speak eloquently how these officers are accustomed to travel and how conscientiously they perform their duties while on tour. The usual procedure with most of the officers is to go to their destination—a convenient railway or steamer station and to leave the same by the next train or steamer. Instances are also not rare where the inspecting officers give previous intimation to their subordinate officers to meet them at a railway or steamer station and without alighting from the train or steamer they proceed by the same to their next place of visit. This way of inspection goes on until they return to their head quarters in a circuitous method. It is almost unusual for the superior officers of the department to undertake any journey into the interior of any district where rail, steamer or motor communications are not available. It is also a very rare case with them to meet and discuss with the non-officials—not to speak of the cultivators—any question of

agricultural improvements in the districts under their charge. Space does not permit to make any further comment on it.

I was once invited by a member of the Executive Council to accompany him on a tour of inspection of a famine area. The journey was performed partly in steam launch and partly in railway saloon. As is the custom a high official of the Agricultural Department and the Collector of the District also followed suit. Needless to say, nothing came of it. The agricultural officer whispered to my ear that if simply the price of the coal consumed had been paid to the famished people some lives at any rate would have been saved from starvation. The visits of the Executive Council Member or of the Governor often turn out to be *visitations*, as they are undertaken often with a view to refute the cry of distress raised in the newspapers (*cf.* Vol. I. p. 250 *et seq.*).

#### X—BENGAL PENALISED.

It has already been shown that from the very commencement of British rule the vast resources of Bengal have been continuously utilised for the expansion of British conquests and for the East India Company's investment.<sup>18</sup> (Vol. I. p. 428 *et seq.*). Even to-day the process of bleeding is going on.

"Mr. R. W. Brock, late Editor of *Capital*, Calcutta's oldest financial Anglo-Indian (old style) weekly, writing on 'Bengal and its Jute Industry' in the July number of *The Asiatic Review*, says :

Suffice it to say that, in a Province with a population numbering approximately fifty millions, the Provincial Government has a revenue

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<sup>18</sup> "Bengal is in itself an inexhaustible fund of riches, and you may depend upon being supplied with money and provisions in abundance."—Clive to Mr. Pigot, Governor of Madras; *vide* Malcolm's *Clive*, Vol. I. p. 570.

"With regard to the magnitude of *our possessions*, be not staggered (*italics* are mine). . . . When the revenues are all perfectly regulated, the Company will receive, clear of civil and military expenses, . . . a net income of £2,000,000 sterling 'per annum.'"—Clive's Letter to Mr. Dudley, 29th Sept., 1765.—*Ibid.*, Vol. II. p. 344.

not exceeding £10,000,000 to finance requirements so varied and comprehensive as Police, Education, General Administration, Civil Works, Justice, Medical, Jails, Excise, Public Health, Agriculture, Registration, Stationery and Printing, Forests, and last but not least, Industries. In other words—to quote only one illuminating comparison—under the Montagu-Chelmsford Constitution the Bengal Government was allotted, for all purposes, a smaller sum than the London County Council spends on education alone.

“£10,000,000 at the present rate of exchange is equal to Rs. 133,333,333½. For years Bengal’s revenue has been very much less than that sum. That is the only inaccuracy in Mr. Brock’s statement.

“His comparison of Bengal’s total *provincial* revenue with the educational expenditure alone of the London County Council is very illuminating. The population of the Administrative County of London is 4,385,825 against Bengal’s fifty millions. The London County Council’s net educational expenditure in 1933-34 was, according to *Whitaker’s Almanac*, £12,169,839. Its net total expenditure on all heads was £28,114,949. Including debt charges, the total was £30,086,394.

“Mr. Brock continues :

In effect, under the Meston Settlement, all the expanding revenues—such as customs duties and income-tax—were retained by the Government of India, while most of the Departments calling for larger expenditure were assigned to the Provincial Governments, and, in particular, to the Indian Ministers, such as health, education, agricultural improvements, etc. It was peculiarly unfortunate that in Bengal, as I have already noted, the ministers were left to face the Legislature with empty pockets : a position not conducive either to political popularity or constructive achievement. *Provincial taxation in Bengal was extended to the limits of tolerance and productivity*; but of the total revenues collected in the Province from all sources, about two-thirds were taken by the Central Government, *whose expenditure is mainly incurred outside the Province*, leaving the Provincial Administration only the exiguous income already mentioned. (Italics are ours. Ed., M. R.).

“Those who think that taxation in Bengal is lighter than in other provinces, relatively speaking, ought to reflect on Mr. Brock’s words, ‘Provincial taxation in Bengal was extended to the limits of tolerance and productivity.’

"The significance of the fact that the Central Government takes away about two-thirds of Bengal's revenues and spends the amount mainly outside Bengal should be clearly understood. The largest item of expenditure of the Central Government is that incurred on 'Defence.' As recruits for the army are not, generally speaking, taken from Bengal, nor camp-followers, therefore, for her big contribution to the Central Exchequer Bengal gets no return in the form of salaries paid to these persons. That is only one direction—there are others—in which some other regions are gainers, Bengal is not. Bengal is only made to pay.

"Mr. Brock has explained himself more fully in the following paragraph :—

Calcutta, that is to say, collects revenues which the Delhi Administration distributes—mainly in Upper India. Perhaps the process I refer to can be illustrated most vividly by instancing the yield of the jute export duty. Jute is grown virtually only in Bengal, and in the rural areas is the principal source of income, while in Calcutta jute manufacture is the principal industry. In the last decade, however, the Central Government has collected between £30,000,000 and £40,000,000 by this form of taxation, and has retained the whole amount, *allowing* the provincial Government to finance, for example, even the Agricultural Department, to whose efforts, prior to the world depression, the progressive improvement in the outturn and quality of the jute crop was largely due. Analogously, while the extension of the mill industry in Calcutta threw additional expenditure on the Bengal Government, the Central Government monopolized the revenue from income-tax, which represents the principal method of securing for the state a reasonable percentage of the substantial profits this industry, until recently, has obtained. Here, again, therefore, Bengal was unable to retain any share of the taxation collected within its own borders. Very large sums flowed out: only insignificant rivulet flowed back.

"There is quiet unconscious humour in the word "*allowing*", which we have italicized above. It is indeed very *graciotis* on the part of the Central Government to take all the receipts from the sources mentioned and *allow* the Bengal Government to meet all the expenditure."—(*Modern Review*, Sep., 1934).

It is true half the export duty on jute has been restored this year. Against this any number of indirect taxation has been placed on the shoulders of the people. Not only taxation

on articles of luxury, but also on the daily necessities of life has been piled, so that the poor peasants may not escape. Thus the price of post-cards has been trebled ; the rate on parcel post has been increased. Moreover during the last 5 years additional duties have been levied on piece-goods, salt, sugar, kerosene, areca-nuts, spices, rayon, machinery etc. ; railway fare has been enhanced ; in fact, it has been calculated that during Sir Geo. Schuster's regime somewhere near 50 crores of rupees have been raised from these items. When it is borne in mind that during this slump period, people have suffered most from reduction of income, it is needless to point out what this additional burden means. It might be urged that the duties on imported articles press equally on the people of other provinces as well ; against this it has to be said that Bengal with her population of 50 millions is the biggest consumer of the above articles ; hence this indirect taxation presses most heavily on her. In fact, what little relief has been afforded in the shape of partial restoration of the jute tax has been more than made up as shown above. What has been given with one hand has been taken away with the other, while no sincere effort is made for retrenchments.

#### XI—CREATION OF NEW PROVINCES—ITS ORIGIN AND PSYCHOLOGY.

I am strongly of opinion that the different provinces of India should be re-organized on linguistic, ethnic and cultural basis. The *Statesman* (July 5, 1933) of Calcutta in supporting the creation of "New Orissa" took occasion to observe :

"The history of the Orissa question has its beginnings in the year 1866 when Sir Stafford Northcote, then Secretary of State for India, favoured the redistribution of provincial territories with a view to bringing under one separate administration the various groups of people with a common ethnic origin and cultural affinity."

In fact, Bengal stands to gain much if the principle enunciated above be given effect to. Her case has been

admirably put in the Report of the Committee for the year 1932 of the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce :

"The Bengalees placed outside Bengal, in areas which ought to be transferred to this Province on historical, cultural, linguistic and ethnological grounds, make up as much as 12% of Bengal's population. Their transfer back to Bengal would mean an increment of 12% of the Provincial revenue of Bengal, amounting to a crore and a half, taking the present normal revenue to be Rs. 12 crores. On the estimate of Bengal's gross income of Rs. 32 crores, the increment would be Rs. 4 crores.

"The Bengali-speaking areas lying outside Bengal comprise the zone of the richest mineral districts as in Bihar, or tea plantations as in Assam. Their contribution to Bengal's revenue would, therefore, be higher than that ascertained by the mere counting of heads on a population basis.

"These Bengali-speaking areas may be roughly taken to be as follows :—Dalbhum, rich in mineral resources, the seat of Tata Iron Works and other factories and mines ; Manbhum, similarly rich in deposits of coal and other mineral products ; Pakur sub-division of Sonthal Parganas ; Kissenganj sub-division of Purnea district ; a large part of Bhagalpur district ; and Goalpara and Sylhet in Assam. The Orissa Boundaries Committee had already declared some of these as Bengali-speaking, and turned down the claims preferred to them by the Oriyas. A Bengal Boundaries Committee would surely pronounce the same verdict in respect of the other areas.

"Before the Provinces start as self-governing states, there must be a complete stock-taking of their resources. In the case of Bengal, the problem of her resources is largely the problem of her boundaries. She cannot afford to lose permanently in size and shape, territory and man power. Handicapped already by the Meston Award, she is to figure in the Federation as the poorest state as a result of artificial and arbitrary arrangements. A Province, out of which resources have been drawn for more than a century in different parts of India for purposes other than her own interests, would here-

after rank as a third-class constituent in the Indian Federation, with her revenue fixed at half the rate per head of population secured by Bombay or Madras, evidently a case involving gross violence to historical and economic consideration alike.

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“The arbitrary character of such distribution of provincial boundaries is clearly borne out by the fact that these districts have never disclaimed their intimate and long-standing relations with the province of Bengal, nor have they even yet lost their alien character in their newly adopted environment. The woeful condition of the people of these districts is a natural consequence of the conflict between their administrative allegiance to a strange province and their traditional, cultural, linguistic and social affinities with the people of Bengal.

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“In India there are only a number of administrative areas which have grown up almost hap-hazard as the result of conquest, suspension of former rulers or administrative convenience. No one of them has been deliberately formed with a view to its suitability as a self-governing unit within a federated whole. The artificiality of the boundary demarcations has recently gained recognition even from the Government of India and it may be recalled in this connection that the latter have put themselves under a pledge to go into the problem with a view to reshuffle the present arrangement. Thus, during the Viceroyalty of Lord Hardinge, when certain areas in Western Bengal were allotted to the newly constituted province of Bihar and Orissa, a definite assurance was given that the question of restoring to Bengal the Bengali-speaking portions annexed to Bihar would be subsequently considered. The memorable despatch of Lord Hardinge of August, 1911 which was endorsed by the Durbar speech of His Majesty the King Emperor also favoured the amalgamation of the Bengali-speaking districts in the adjoining provinces with their mother province. As a matter of fact the claim of restoring Sylhet has already received the approval of the Governments of both

Bengal and Assam, which are practically the only provinces interested in the transfer.

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"The Committee would in this connection refer to the Report of the Orissa Committee from which it may be easily surmised that the Bengalees constitute the preponderant element in the composition of the population in the district of Manbhum and also over a large section of the Singhbhum district, particularly in the Dhalbhum area. Incidentally it should also be borne in mind that having regard to the key position of coal in the industrial system of the country, it is of the highest value to the Province in the planning of its industrial life to be the possessor of large resources of coal.

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"She claims restoration to her of parts which were severed from her for the formation of new provinces. She can no longer spare these parts for the benefit of other provinces in the coming Federation which promises to leave her as a deficit province under inequitable financial conditions not of her own creation. She asserts her natural, fundamental right to be reconstituted a linguistic unit as the home of 52 millions of Indians speaking a common language and fit to rank as a nation by themselves. She protests against Bengal being distributed among her neighbouring provinces which treat them as discontented minorities with their rights to their own culture imperfectly recognised."

I should add here that Manbhum and Singhbhum contain the most salubrious climate where the malaria-stricken Bengalis may not only go for a change but settle down as these may be regarded as sanatoria or health resorts.

Thus while Orissa and Sind are going to be constituted as new provinces, the claims of Bengal go unheeded, as if the Government is determined to keep her in perpetuity emasculated and impoverished.

There is, however, another melancholy aspect of the question. The partition cry often emanates from selfish and



political considerations. A few self-seeking and clamorous individuals constitute themselves as the mouthpiece of the people, because they know full well that in the newly created Province there will be a new Governor with his ministers and other administrative heads ; and a large number of well paid posts. In short, it is the gorgeous vision of the satisfaction of personal aims that really loom before these self-seekers. It is conveniently forgotten what huge additional burdens would be imposed.

The dumb voiceless millions in whose name they base their claims are always in the background. They are simply used as pawns in the game—they are the dupes and the exploited, only husks will be left for them as the greedy locusts will eat up the substances.

*The Mussulman* about two years ago had some sound observations to make.

"There are amongst the Indian Mussalmans, as amongst our Hindu fellow-countrymen, two main schools of politicians and political thinkers. One school would maintain British supremacy and would be satisfied if only more Indians be taken into the services of the Government, if the legislatures be only extended and if only there be a wider scope for the middle class people to be members of, and to hold high offices under, the Government. They would hardly do anything for the masses, *though they would exploit them when opportunity arises, in most cases for the attainment of their own ends.*

"The other school believes that the country cannot at all prosper under foreign domination—foreign domination and foreign connection are, of course, altogether different things—and the primary object in their public life is national assertion and acquisition of political power so that the interests of the masses—the labouring and the cultivating classes who form about 90% of the Indian population and are the backbone of the nation—may be satisfactorily furthered and the chronic poverty of a very large section of them may, so far as possible, be ultimately removed."

This also explains the cry for communal representation, which has been started by the Prime Minister's award. So many seats in the Council Chamber for the Hindus, so many for the Moslems, among the Hindus again so many for the high castes and so many for the "Depressed" classes. The old territorial constituencies are eliminated and candidates for election are taught only to appeal to the electors on specific selfish, and parochial and group interests. They are taught thereby only to keep in view their own narrow outlook. The country is thus split up into smaller warring units; and made to forget real national concerns—namely, public health, sanitation, land reclamation, agricultural development, and above all, mass education. To me it matters very little whether a few more seats go to the share of the Hindus or the Moslems or the "Depressed" classes provided the real issues are not clouded and lost sight of.<sup>19</sup> Hence separate electorate will prove to be

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<sup>19</sup> The mischief sought to be created and perpetuated by the Award has been eloquently pointed out by two distinct schools of British statesmen belonging to parties whose views generally differ as the poles asunder. The Marquess of Zetland and his colleagues including the Marquess of Salisbury, Earl of Derby, Lord Lytton, Lord Hardinge, and Lord Middleton in their note of dissent to the Joint Parliamentary Committee's Report after criticising the provisions of the Award in the most trenchant language, have summed up the position in the following words :

*"We have already stated our objections to conferring upon a community by statute a definite majority unalterable by an appeal to the electorate. When the relative position of the two communities in Bengal in every thing except actual number is taken into account, it will be seen that the reasons against placing the Hindu community in a position of permanent statutory inferiority in the legislature are particularly strong. Under British rule, the Hindus have played an enormously predominant part in the intellectual, the cultural, the political, the professional and the commercial life of the province . . . In all previous constitutions the significance of these facts has been admitted."* (italics are mine).

In the circumstances set forth above, the fair and reasonable course, according to the Marquess of Zetland, would have been to recommend that in Bengal all general territorial constituencies should be open to candidates of both the communities without reservation of seats or separate electorates. But as His Lordship and his friends rightly realised, such a course would have raised a hornets' nest about their ears.

a curse as it makes people communally minded and blind to the real good of the state. The lines of cleavage which have shown themselves will yawn wider and other distinct fissures will soon be manifest.

Mr. H. N. Brailsford representing the Labour Party says :

"The dangerous Hindu nationalist element is held in check by the astonishing arithmetic which, after heavily over-representing every discoverable minority, finally allots to the caste Hindus only 86 seats out of the 250 that fall to British India in the Assembly and yet the caste Hindus form the indisputable majority of the population.

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Not content with creating a Parliament that can by its composition do nothing unseemly, they have loaded it with "Safeguards". On limbs incapable of motion they must need hang fetters."—*Property or Peace?* pp. 211-12.

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## CHAPTER XI.

### EMASCULATION AND DEMARTIALISATION OF THE INDIAN PEOPLE UNDER BRITISH RULE.

"If there is trouble, others will quiet it down. If there is riot, others will subdue it. If there is danger, others will face it. If our country is in peril, others will defend it.—When a people feel like this, it indicates that they have got to a stage when all sense of civic responsibility has been crushed out of them, and the system which is responsible for this feeling is inconsistent with the self-respect of normal human beings."—Lord Sinha.

"And it is to be feared that our rule may have diminished what little power of this sort (evolving a stable government) it may have originally possessed. For our supremacy has necessarily depressed those classes which had anything of the talent or habit of government."—Seeley : *The Expansion of England*.

"Nor is it only in their intelligence that they (the public at large) suffer; their moral capacities are equally stunted. Wherever the sphere of action of human beings is artificially circumscribed, their sentiments are narrowed and dwarfed in the same proportion."—J. S. Mill : *Representative Government*.

There is a certain class of English writers whose outlook is narrow and vision blurred ; they can only take a superficial view of events and lack penetration and deep insight. Thus Stewart quotes with approbation the view that the great mass of the population have had their condition ameliorated, "although certain classes may have been depressed."

"In the following remarks from the 5th Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the affairs of the East India Company, I most heartily concur ; and believe them, from my own experience, to be perfectly well founded.

"In the Bengal provinces, where peace has been enjoyed for a period of time perhaps hardly paralleled in Oriental history, [improvements] have manifested themselves in the ameliorated condition of the great mass of the population, although certain classes may have been depressed by the indispensable policy

of a foreign Government. The nature and circumstances of our situation prescribe narrow limits to the prospects of the natives, in the political and military branches of the public service: strictly speaking, however, they were foreigners who generally enjoyed the great offices in those departments, even under the Moghul Government; but to agriculture and commerce every encouragement is afforded, under a system of laws, the prominent object of which is, to protect the weak from oppression, and to secure to every individual the fruits of his industry. The country, as may be expected, has under these circumstances, exhibited, in every part of it, improvement, on a general view, advancing with accelerated progress in latter time"—Stewart: *History of Bengal*.

#### I—POLICY OF PATHAN KINGS AND THE SUBADARS.

Literally the Pathan Kings of Bengal as also the Subadars (Provincial Governors) were of foreign origin, but certainly they were not foreigners in the sense in which the British rulers are.<sup>1</sup> Nor were the children of the soil, who were mostly Hindus, excluded from high administrative and military offices, which has been the systematic policy under the British rule. Stewart who endorses the views of the Select Committee from "his own experience" contradicts himself in the body of his *History*, as the subjoined excerpts will prove:

"The Nuwab [Shuja], immediately after, selected a Council, consisting of the two brothers, Hajy Ahmed and Aly Verdy Khan; Roy Alum Chund, for whom he procured the title of Roy Royan; and the Imperial banker, Juggut Seat; and by their advice conducted himself in all the measures of his government. The two latter were Hindoos, and were well acquainted with the minute details of business and all the intricacies of the revenue department (p. 417).

"Having resettled the government of Behar, he [Aly Verdy] appointed his grandson, Seraje ad Dowlah, [nominal] Governor of that province, but nominated Raja Janky Ram<sup>2</sup> to be his deputy, and to perform the duty (p. 483).

"Soon after Seraje ad Dowlah's return to Moorshudabad, he, in order to try the allegiance of his cousin, appointed a person named Rasbehary

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Burke's Speech quoted in Vol. I. p. 432.

<sup>2</sup> Raja Janakiram was a Bengali Kayestha.

to the foudjary of Birnagar in Purneah, and ordered Shokut Jung to put him immediately in possession of the office (p. 506).

"[Seraje ad Dowlah] sent orders to Raja Ramnarain whom Aly Verdy Khan had made Deputy-governor of Behar, to assemble his forces, and, having crossed the river, to enter Purneah; [and the other army] under the orders of Raja Mohun Loll crossed that river at Surdah (p. 507).

"Raja Mohun Loll entered Purneah, and took possession of all the wealth and property of Shokut Jung" (p. 510).

In fact, during the Subadarship of Aliverdi, Siraj-uodowla and Mir Jaffar, the highest posts in the civil and military departments were almost the monopoly of the Hindus. Raja Ramnarayan was not only the Governor of Behar (Patna) but held also the Chief Military Command in that province; his prowess on the battle field is writ large in the pages of history.<sup>3</sup> Shitab Roy, though not a Bengali, was equally conspicuous for his bravery and martial spirit:

"A chief named Schitab Roy had been entrusted with the government of Behar. His valour and his attachment to the English had more than once been signally proved. On that memorable day on which the people of Patna saw from their walls the whole army of the Mogul scattered by the little band of Captain Knox, the voice of the British conquerors assigned the palm of gallantry to the brave Asiatic. 'I never', said Knox, when he introduced Schitab Roy, covered with blood and dust, to the English functionaries assembled in the factory, 'I never saw a native fight so before.'"—Macaulay: *Warren Hastings*.

Under Murshid Kuli Khan the revenue Department was run entirely by the Hindus, namely Bhupati Roy, Darpanarain and Raghunandan the founder of the Natore Raj; while Lahory Mall was a Hindu military commander. Under this great Nabob all the big zemindars, with the exception of the Raja of Birbhum (a Mussulman) were Hindus.—*Vide Nababi Amal* or "Bengal under the Nabobs" by K. P. Bannerji.

Durlavram [Dullub] and Mir Jaffer were the chief military commanders under Siraj. Cf. "Roydullab had been sent with a considerable body of men to occupy an entrenched camp at Plassey."—Malcolm's *Clive*, Vol. I. p. 217. Again, "his (Mir Jaffer's) Prime Minister, Roy Dullub . . . has more than half the Army under his command"—*Ibid.*, p. 336.

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<sup>3</sup> Regarding Ramnarayan *vide* Clive's eloquent testimony in Malcolm's *Clive*, Vol. I. pp. 333-36.

## II—OSTRACISM OF INDIANS FROM POSTS OF RESPONSIBILITY.

The *bāra bhunyas* had not only standing land forces but regular flotilla to repel the piratical depredations of the Mugs and the Arrakanese. Even now there are several Hindu families in Bengal who bear the proud appellation of *Mirbahar*, i.e., Commander of the Fleet.<sup>4</sup> In the early days of British conquest both in the Madras Presidency and Bengal many Indians held high military ranks, and European privates and even officers did not disdain to serve under their command. When however British ascendancy was secured on a firm footing, the idea of an *Empire in Asia* began to dawn upon the servants of the East India Company, and their head began to turn and the feeling of the conqueror and the conquered slowly permeated the services from top to bottom. Even the "Tommy" was seized with imperialistic fever and refused to salute an Indian, however high his qualifications were. The arrogance of a ruling caste began to pervade the rank and file of the British regiments. The consciousness of superiority slowly and imperceptibly became more and more deeply ingrained in the dominant race as British paramountcy was established on a solid basis, with the result that the gulf between the rulers and the ruled yawned wider and wider. By the time of Lord Cornwallis, the ostracism of Indians from all posts of honour and responsibility was complete.

I am tempted to quote the precious words of Sir T. Munro :

"The main evil of our system is the degraded state in which we hold the natives . . . We exclude them from every situation of trust and emolument; we confine them to the lowest offices, with scarcely a bare subsistence; and even these are left in their hands from necessity, because Europeans are utterly incapable of filling them. We treat them as an inferior race of beings. Men who, under a native government,

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<sup>4</sup> Under the Pathan kings of Bengal the *bāra bhunyas*, or the twelve baronial lords, held practically sovereign sway; they paid only a nominal tribute, which was withheld when the ruler on the throne was weak. Raja Janakiram was head of the Revenue Department under Ali Verdy. His son was the celebrated Durlavram, who with Mir Jaffer and Jagat Sett played a conspicuous part in the plot to dethrone Siraj.

might have held the highest offices of the state; who, but for us, might have been governors of provinces, are regarded as little better than menial servants. . . . We reduce them to this abject state, and then look down upon them with disdain, as men unworthy of high station.

"Is the effect, then, of our boasted laws to be ultimately merely that of maintaining tranquillity, and keeping the inhabitants in such a state of debasement that not one of them shall even be fit to be entrusted with authority? If ever it was the object 'of the most anxious solicitude of the Government to dispense with their services except in matters of detail,' it is high time that policy so degrading to our subjects, and so dangerous to ourselves, should be abandoned, and a more liberal one adopted. It is the policy of the British Government to improve the character of its subjects, and this cannot be better done than by raising them in their own estimation, by employing them in situations both of trust and authority."

The mischievous consequences of this policy were first pointed out by Sir T. Munro. Since then, other eminent Anglo-Indian statesmen—Elphinstone, Tucker, Malcolm, Lawrence, Law, Sleeman, Clerk, and others have spoken in no uncertain language.

I quote below from my essay<sup>a</sup> written half-a-century ago :

Unfortunately, the infatuation with which England had been seized was dead to all note of admonition and warning. In a remarkable letter—remarkable alike for its pregnant remarks and the boldness and candour of its tone—which the great Governor of Madras had addressed, in 1817 to the then Governor-General (Lord Hastings), we find the following observations :

"I doubt very much if the condition of the people would be better than under their native princes. The strength of the British Government enables it to put down every rebellion, to repel every foreign invasion, and to give to its subjects a degree of protection which those of no native power enjoy. Its laws and institutions also afford them a security from domestic oppression unknown in those States. But these advantages are dearly bought; they are purchased by the sacrifice of independence, of national character, and of whatever renders a people respectable. The natives of the British provinces may, without fear, pursue their different occupations, as traders, meerasiders, and husbandmen, and enjoy the fruits of their labour in tranquillity; but none of them can aspire to anything beyond this mere animal state of thriving

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<sup>a</sup> *India before and after the Mutiny* by an Indian Student.



in peace—none of them can look forward to any share in the legislation or civil or military government of their country. It is from men who hold or are eligible to public office, that natives take their character : where no such men exist, there can be no energy in any other class of the community. The effect of this is observable in all the British provinces, whose inhabitants are certainly the most abject race in India. No elevation of character can be expected from men who, in the military line cannot attain to any rank above that of a subadar, where they are as much below an ensign as an ensign is below the commander-in-chief, and who, in a civil line, can hope for nothing beyond some petty judicial or revenue office, in which they may by corrupt means make up for their slender salary."

Again : "The consequence, therefore, of the conquest of India by the British arms would be, in place of raising, to debase the whole people. There is perhaps no example of any conquest in which the natives have been so completely excluded from all share of the government of their country as in British India."

"It would be difficult to discover in history another instance of this ostracism of a whole people. The grandsons of the Gauls, who resisted Cæsar, became Roman senators. The grandsons of the Rajpoots, who opposed Baber in his attempt to establish the Mogul power, and at the battle of Biana all but nipped his enterprise in the bud, were employed by his grandson, Akbar, in the government of provinces and the command of armies, and they fought valiantly for him on the shores of the Bay of Bengal and on the banks of the Oxus. They rewarded his confidence by unshaken loyalty to the throne, even when it was endangered by the conspiracies of his own Mahommedan satraps. But wherever our sovereignty was established in India the path of honourable ambition, and every prospect of fame, wealth, and power, was at once closed on the natives of the country. This proscription was rendered the more galling by comparison with the practice of the native courts around, where the highest prizes were open to universal competition."—Marshman.

General Nott speaks with admiration of his "fine" Sepoys, to whose valour and heroism he was indebted for the defence of the Candahar garrison. The Mogul emperors also had their Afghan wars, but they appointed a great many Hindu princes, like Todar Mall, as commanders of the expedition. Again we read : "In the struggles for empire amongst the sons of Sah Jehan, consequent upon his illness, the importance of the Rajput princes and the fidelity we have often to depict were exhibited in the strongest light. The Rahtore prince (Jeswant Rao) was declared *generalissimo* of the army destined to oppose Anrangzebe". Can a Hindu ever aspire to be a Pollock, or a Nott,

or a Roberts under the benign British rule? What is the highest goal of his ambition? The "rank of a subaltern officer,"

During the present century there have sprung up in India in connection with the Native States, financiers, administrators, and statesmen, one and all of whom would have done honour to any country in Europe. Conspicuous amongst these stand the names of Poornea and Runga Charlu (Mysore), Shasia Shastri (Paduacotta), Sir Salar Jung (Hyderabad), "as distinctly a statesman as Lawrence or Dalhousie," Sir T. Madhava Rao (Travancore, and Baroda), Sir Dinkar Rao (Gawalior), Kripa Ram (Jammu), Pandit Manpál (Alwar), Faiz Ali Khan (Kotah), and last, but not least, Madho Rao Barnè (of Kolahpur). How is it that in British India proper we scarcely find any such names? The reason is not far to seek. The numerous Native States, with the little vestige of power which they have been allowed to retain, afford ample scope for the display of administrative abilities; whereas in British dominions native talents are kept confined within narrow and circumscribed limits.<sup>7</sup>

During the five decades that have passed since the above was written, the policy of the British Government has been marked by an increasing association of Indians in the affairs of the administration. But this unfortunately has not resulted in the development of initiative and resourcefulness among the people, for the tendency has been always to push up those men to the higher offices of state who are considered in secret official despatches "as safe as dead mutton" (*cf.* p. 122).

I have just shown that the native states of India have provided in many cases opportunities for the development of Indian talents, but here too the baneful influences of the present system of Government are quite apparent. An enlightened ruler of an Indian state has been an exception rather than a rule. It could not have been otherwise, as will be at once evident from this short extract from Mr. Pannikar's *Indian States and the Government of India* :

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<sup>6</sup> "Discontent of a most serious kind existed among the Indian army, owing to the pay, and owing to the impossibility of native soldiers rising to any rank above that of a subaltern officer."—Lord R. Churchill: *Speech*, 5th May, 1885.

<sup>7</sup> Appreciative portraits of some of these eminent characters are given in Temple's *Men and Events of my Time*.

"The only thing we have to note in connection with the degraded luxury and the meaningless pomp of many Indian courts is that such a result is inevitable when there is no sense of direct responsibility in the princes. In olden times a despot who oppressed his subjects or a debauchee who looked only to his pleasure was not left long undisturbed. Either an outside invasion or an internal rebellion put an end to his career. But the British Government now supports the ruler as long as he is loyal to his agreement and does not too openly violate civilized conventions. The ruler is left free in such a case to do whatever he pleases with his treasury and to fleece his subjects to any extent for the sake of his pleasures."

Mr. Pannikar also quotes the observations of Sir Thomas Munro :

"The usual remedy of bad Government in India is a quiet revolution in the palace or a violent one by rebellion. But the presence of the British force cuts off every chance of remedy by supporting the prince on the throne against any foreign and domestic enemy. It renders him indolent by teaching him to trust to strangers for his security, cruel and avaricious by showing him that he has nothing to fear from the hatred of his subjects."

Not content with the complete exclusion of Indians from high administrative offices, the early British rulers of India, in their love for the centralization of all power did not hesitate to destroy the time-honoured system of self-government prevailing in the Indian village communities. The mischief has been incalculable, and the people have been veritably reduced to the status of dumb, driven cattle. I quote here another paragraph from my old essay :

One of the leading features of the system of internal administration which owes its origin to the Marquis of Cornwallis is, to quote the biographer of Sir T. Munro, "the entire subversion of every native institution, . . . and the removal, as much as possible, out of the hands of the natives, of every species of power and influence." The same writer further on continues : "Again, in all Indian villages, there was a regularly constituted municipality, by which its affairs, both of revenue and police were administered, and which exercised to a very considerable extent magisterial and judicial authority in all matters, private as well as public . . . But the most remarkable of all the native institutions was perhaps, the Panchayet. This was an assembly of a certain number of the inhabitants, before whom parties maintaining disputes one with another pleaded their own cause, and who like an English jury, heard

both sides patiently, and then gave a decision according to their own views of the case." Sir Charles Metcalf's eloquent and graphic account of the Indian village communities is also worth quoting here :

"The village communities are little republics, having nearly everything they want within themselves and almost independent of any foreign relations. They seem to last where nothing else lasts. Dynasty after dynasty tumbles down; revolution succeeds to revolution; Hindoo, Pathan, Mogul, Marhatta, Sikh, English—are all masters in turn; but the village community remains the same . . . . This union of village communities, each one forming a separate little state by itself, has, I consider, contributed more than any other cause to the preservation of the people of India through all the revolutions and changes which they have suffered and is in a high degree conducive to their happiness, and to the enjoyment of a great portion of freedom and independence."

These noble and time-honoured institutions—where are they? Echo mocks the inquirer, and repeats: "Where are they?"

Thus all power of every kind—civil, judicial, and administrative—having been abstracted from these native institutions, was lodged in the hands of the English magistrates, or those of highly paid officials in the local centres. The account of the functions of the magistrate as given to Lanoye still holds good.

"Sachez donc que nos magistrats de Zillahs, à leurs fonctions d'administrateurs, de collecteurs, de juges au civil et au criminel ; joignent encore celles de préfets de police."—*L'Inde Contemporaine* (1858).

Now, the population of a Zillah (district), often as big as Yorkshire, varies from two to four millions ; and the personage of whom we are speaking, not being omnipresent and omniscient, is a perfect stranger to the wants and grievances of those entrusted to his care. Shut up within the four walls of the bureau, the Anglo-Indian administrators spend their time in report-making and précis-writing. But they labour under one great disadvantage, namely, they know not the people for whom they are supposed to be responsible. As Sir James Caird says: "The tendency here of officialism is to bring every person into subjection to the rule of the officials,

who are constantly asking for returns and statistics, which, though often buried in their bureaus when they get them, occupy much of the time of the district officers in inquiry and preparation. The natural relations between landlord and tenant are occasionally made the subject of experimental theories, by men who never had any land of their own."

### III—NO FREEDOM FOR INDIANS.

The new system of land revenue introduced by the British rulers has also proved a crushing burden and is the chief contributory cause of the dire poverty of the masses. Sir Sankaran Nair, an ex-member of the Viceroy's Executive Council and a moderate among moderates, maintained that the *ryotwari* system was devised mainly with a view to destroy the spirit of independence in the peasantry as the following extract will show :

"Quoting extensively from a former civilian named Thackeray who was mainly responsible for bringing into being the present 'Ryotwari System,' Sir Sankaran showed that the present land revenue system had a political basis. Mr. Thackeray says that in those times each man in Malabar and South Kanara had a small plot of land of his own which he cultivated and on which he lived. The cultivator was independent spirited and had a great desire to go forward. These great qualities, says Mr. Thackeray, must be rooted out of them. A craving for freedom, and an independent spirit should not be fostered in the Indian; that was against the interests of Britain. They did not want Indians as soldiers, statesmen or judges. It was for these reasons that the *ryotwari* system was devised.

"The basic principle of the *ryotwari* system was none other than the idea that after deducting the land revenue, the cultivator should not have anything left with him of the produce except the wherewithal for his meagre subsistence till the next harvest time. Mr. Thackeray's ideas have triumphed."

What Dilke wrote in 1890 in his *Problems of Greater Britain* is substantially true even to-day :

"It is indeed difficult to see upon what ground it can be contended that our Indian government is not despotic. The people who pay the taxes have no control over administration. The rulers of the country are nominated from abroad. The laws are made by them without the

assent of representatives of the people. Moreover, that it is the case which, as has been seen, was not the case under the despotism of Rome, or in India itself under the despotism of the Moghuls, namely, that the people of the country are excluded almost universally from high military rank, and generally from high rank in the Civil Service. *The nomination of a few natives to positions upon the Councils is clearly in this matter but a blind*, and it cannot be seriously contended that the Government of India ceases to be a despotism because it acknowledges a body of laws. On this principle the Russian Government is not a despotism, because the Emperor never takes a decision without some support for his views in the Imperial Senate. (The italics are mine).

"It is also true that, with modern facilities for coming home and for reaching the hill stations, the present generation, both of soldiers and civilians, are less identified with India than was the case with their predecessors. . . . Moreover, it must be constantly borne in mind that the great majority of the people of India are credulous and superstitious, and given to believing the most extraordinary inventions without the smallest evidence, and that there constantly circulate in India rumours as to the actions and the intentions of the Government, which are generally believed, although entirely without foundation, and which affect prejudicially the view taken of the rulers by the ruled."

I shall conclude this chapter with the following quotation from Seeley's *Expansion of England*.

"We doubt whether with all the merits of our administration the subjects of it are happy. We may even doubt whether our rule is preparing them for a happier condition, whether it may not be sinking them lower in misery, and we have our misgivings that perhaps a genuine Asiatic Government, and still more a national Government springing up out of the Hindoo population itself, might in the long run be more beneficial because more congenial, though perhaps less civilized, than such a foreign unsympathetic government as our own."

No political principle can ever be truer than what the great English statesman said: "Good Government is no substitute for Self-Government."

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## CHAPTER XII.

### A GLIMPSE INTO INDIA BEFORE AND AFTER THE BRITISH OCCUPATION.

The following extracts from Elphinstone's *History of India* describe the general condition of the country in the 14th—16th centuries :

"The condition of the people in ordinary times does not appear to have borne the marks of oppression. The historian of Fīrūz Shāh (A.D. 1351 to 1394) expatiates on the happy state of the ryots, the goodness of the houses and furniture, and the general use of gold and silver ornaments by their women. He is a panegyric writer, and not much to be trusted; but he says, among other things, that every ryot had a good bedstead and a neat garden; and the mere mention of such circumstances shows a more minute attention to the comforts of the people than would be met with in a modern author.

"The general state of the country must, no doubt, have been flourishing. Nicolo di Conti, who travelled about A.D. 1420, speaks highly of what he saw about Guzerāt, and found the banks of the Ganges (or perhaps the Méghna) covered with towns, amidst beautiful gardens and orchards, and passed four famous cities before he reached Maarazia, which he describes as a powerful city filled with gold, silver, and precious stones. Barbosa and Bartema, who travelled in the first years of the sixteenth century, corroborate those accounts. The former, in particular, describes Cambay as a remarkably well-built city, in a beautiful and fertile country, filled with merchants of all nations, and with artisans and manufacturers like those of Flanders. Even Ibn Batūta, who travelled during the anarchy and oppression of Mohammed Tughlak's reign (about 1340 or 1350), though insurrections were raging in most parts through which he passed, enumerates many large and populous towns and cities, and gives a high impression of the state in which the country must have been before it fell into disorder.

"Bāber, in the beginning of the sixteenth century, although he regards Hindostan with the same dislike that Europeans still feel, speaks of it as a rich and noble country, abounding in gold and silver; and expresses his astonishment at the swarming population, and the innumerable workmen in every trade and profession.

"The part of India still retained by the Hindūs was nowise inferior to that possessed by the Mahometans.

"Those of them who visited Bijayanagar are unbounded in their admiration of the extent and grandeur of that city; their descriptions of which, and of the wealth of the inhabitants and the pomp of the rája, are equal to those given by others of Delhi and Canouj.

"Other populous towns are mentioned; and Ibn Batáta<sup>1</sup> speaks of Madura, at the extremity of the peninsula (then recently conquered by the Mahometans), as a city like Delhi. The same author says, that through the whole of Malabár for two months' journey, there was not a span free from cultivation: everybody had a garden, with his house placed in the middle of it and a wooden fence round the whole.

"The seaports, above all, seem to have attracted admiration. Those on both coasts are described as large cities, the resort and habitation of merchants from every part of the world, and carrying on trade with Africa, Arabia, Persia, and China. A great home trade was likewise carried on along the coast, and into the interior.

"The roads may have been improved by Shír Sháh; but Ibn Batáta, 200 years before his time, found the highways shaded by trees, with resting houses and wells at regular intervals along a great part of the coast of Malabár, then under the Hindús.

"Báber informs us that when he arrived in India, 'the officers of revenue, merchants, and work-people, were all Hindus'." (Erskine's *Báber*, p. 232).

Lord Acton in his *Lectures on Modern History* says:

"The Portuguese came to India as traders (in 1497). Their main object was the trade of the Far East, which was concentrated at Calicut, and was then carried by the Persian Gulf to Scanderoon and Constantinople, or by Jeddah to Suez and Alexandria. There the Venetians shipped the products of Asia to the markets of Europe.

"It [Calicut] was an international city, where 1500 vessels cleared in a season, where trade was open and property secure, and where the propagation of foreign religion was not resented."

Says K. P. Mitra in his *Indian History*:

"The greatest king (of Vijayanagar) was Krishnadeva Rayá (1509-29). He recovered the fortresses of Raichur and Mudkal and defeated the armies of Orissa, Bijapur and Golconda. . . . He had a charming disposition, and was kind to the fallen enemy; and ever polite to foreign embassies (the emperors had good relations with the Portuguese). His pure and dignified life, his imposing personal

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<sup>1</sup> The celebrated African traveller; he resided at the court of the Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlak from about 1341 to 1347 A.D.



appearance, his military prowess, his patronage of learning and learned men, his charity to Brahmans and endowment of temples, his constant attention to the welfare of his subjects are his claims to our remembrance as a very great king. The Portuguese writers are full of admiration for him.

"Foreign travellers have given us accounts of Vijayanagar—the Italian, Nicolo Conti (1420-31) visiting Devaraya II's court testifies to the beauty of the city and the military strength of the king. The Portuguese travellers, Paes (1522) and Uniz (1535-37), write about the wonderful wealth and splendour of the city. Abdur Razzak (1443-44), the Persian ambassador, was surprised that the citizens, high and low, wore ornaments of gold and jewels on arms, wrists, fingers and neck. Trade and commerce brought wealth and splendour. The fine arts—architecture, sculpture and painting—attained excellence. The emperors were great patrons of literature."

#### I—PRE-BRITISH BENGAL.

"Captain Bowrey, about 1670, described Bengal as 'one of the largest and most potent kingdoms of Hindustan, blessed with many fine rivers that issue out into the sea, some of which were navigable both for great and small ships.' 'On the great river Ganges and many large and fair arms thereof,' he said, 'are seated many fair villages, delicate groves and fruitful lands affording great plenty of sugars, cottons, lacca, honey, bees-wax, butter, oils, rice, grain, with many other beneficial commodities to satisfy this and many other kingdoms. Many ships of the Dutch, the English, the Portuguese do annually resort to lade and transport sundry commodities hence and great commerce goes on into most parts of account in India, Persia, Arabia, China and South Seas.'

"On this river [the Hugli] various European nations planted their early settlements at Hooghly, Chinsura, Baranagar, Chandannagar, Serampur, Bankibazar. The great town Hooghly owed its fame to this river. The hinterland of the town was extremely fertile and well drained, [now the hotbed of malaria]. That the town had one of the finest *choultries* (free rest-houses for all travellers) indicates that it was a busy resort for many merchants and travellers of those days. Near this town was the royal port of Satgaon, referred to by Ralph

Fitch in 1588, as 'a fair city for a city of the Moors and very beautiful of all things.'

"It is during the viceroyalty of Shaista Khan that we get another of those brief illuminating glimpses of Eastern Bengal from the pen of a European traveller writing at first hand. François Bernier, visiting Bengal in 1666, cannot say enough in praise of its wonderful fertility and abundance. 'You may there have almost for nothing three or four kinds of legumes,' he writes, 'which together with rice and butter are the most usual food of the meaner people; and for a Roupie, which is about half a crown, you may have twenty good pullets and more geese and ducks in proportion. There is also plenty of many kinds of fish, both fresh and salt; and, in a word, Bengal is a country abounding in all things.'—Bradley-Birt, *l.c.* pp. 141-42.

We read elsewhere that "the country (Bengal) which is one of the most beautiful in the world, is extremely fertile; there is a number of woods and forests of orange and lemon trees . . . . Sugar is very common . . . . The pasturage is excellent and it produces such an abundance of milk that an enormous quantity of butter and cheese is exported into all adjacent and maritime towns and even into the most distant countries, especially Batavia."

" 'As to the commodities of great value, and which draw the commerce of strangers thither, I know not', continues Bernier, 'whether there be a country in the world that affords more and greater variety: for besides the sugar I have spoken of, which may be numbered among the commodities of value, there is such store of cottons and silks, that it may be said, that Bengal is as 'twere the general magazine thereof, not only for Indostan or the empire of the Great Mogol, but also for all the circumjacent kingdoms, and for Europe itself. I have sometimes stood amazed at the vast quantity of cotton-cloth of all sorts, fine and others, tinged and white, which the Hollanders alone draw from thence and transport into many places, especially into Japan and Europe; not to mention what the English, Portugal and Indian merchants carry away from

those ports. 'The like may be said of the silks and silk-stuffs of all sorts: one would not imagine the quantity that is hence transported every year'."

Bradley-Birt in his *The Romance of an Eastern Capital* further says:

"The last year of the thirteenth century marks the opening of a new era in the history of Sonargaon. In that year the Emperor Alla Uddin divided the government of Bengal into two parts, and appointed Bahadur Khan to be governor of the eastern portion, with his capital at Sonargaon. For the next three hundred years it remained, with varying fortunes, the seat of the Mussulman government in Eastern Bengal. It was a troublous period that was opening for the newly formed province. Events succeeded one another with startling rapidity. Situated on the easternmost limits of the empire, it had all the advantages and disadvantages of a frontier province. Free from immediate control, Viceroy after Viceroy was tempted to throw off his allegiance and proclaim his independence. Time and again the empire, beset on every side, was forced to relax its hold. *To the people these things mattered not at all. They were content to sit by, unmoved spectators of the drama*, yet perhaps not without a touch of humour, as they watched their rulers fall out and war continually among themselves. Still, though these contests interested them but little, in other directions the mass of the people felt to the full the advantage and disadvantage of their position on the frontier of the empire. On the one hand Eastern Bengal enjoyed an immunity from strife and bloodshed unknown in the lands that lay nearer the heart of the empire, where great issues were constantly at stake, and vast armies for ever passed to and fro, leaving ruin and desolation in their wake. Though the lot of the cultivator in Eastern Bengal was by no means a secure one, yet he suffered comparatively little from these human locusts. It was no easy country for the transport of troops, and the armies that came this way to subdue some rebellious Viceroy, or to attempt the conquest of Assam, wandered little afield from certain well-defined highways, keeping always close to the

great rivers. Delhi was far off, and the journey down through Oude, Behar, and Bengal, was beset with difficulties and a matter of many days. Sonargaon, set in a circle of great rivers, was inaccessible by road for a great part of the year, and well fitted by nature to defy attack." (*Italics are mine*).

## II—BENGAL DURING THE REIGN OF AURANGZIB.

Here are a few extracts from Stewart's *History of Bengal* :

"Having, in the preceding pages, given what may be termed the dark side of Moorshud Cooly Khan's picture, we have now much pleasure in reversing the object; although we fear the portrait will still not be approved of by Englishmen.

"His judicial decisions were so rational and proper, that they were as much respected and obeyed as the decrees of those monarchs whose names are most renowned for equity and justice.

"He always provided against famine, and severely prohibited all monopolies of grain: . . . . If the importation of grain to the cities and towns fell short of what had been usual, he sent officers into the country, who broke open the hoards of individuals, and compelled them to carry their grain to the public markets. . . . He also strictly prohibited the exportation of grain.

"No zemindar or Aumil could, with impunity, oppress any one : vakeels were continually in search of complaints."

Stewart has to apologise lest "the portrait may not be approved of by Englishmen!"

I quote below the verdict of a Bengali historian, who has made *India under Aurangzib* his life-long study.

"He [Mir Jumla] did nothing which does not reflect the highest credit on him. No other general of that age conducted war with so much humanity and justice, nor kept his soldiers, privates and captains alike, under such discipline; no other general could have retained to the last the confidence and even affection of his subordinates amidst such appalling sufferings and dangers. . . . . On the day when he crossed the Kuch Bihar frontier, he issued strict orders forbidding plunder, rape and oppression on the people, and saw to it that the orders were obeyed.

"At the time of the retreat from Assam, he forbade his army even more strongly than before to molest the peasantry of the country or to rob their goods. We realise Mir Jumla's peculiar excellence more clearly by contrast with others. When his eagle eyes were removed,

the Mughal officers began to oppress the people of Kuch Bihar and lost that kingdom by exciting popular hatred.

"With the coming of Shaista Khan as governor the scene happily changed. His first viceroyalty of Bengal extended for 14 years (1664-1677). During this unusually long period of office in one province, he first ensured the safety of the Bengal rivers and sea-board by destroying the pirates' nest at Chatgaon, won over the Feringi pirates and settled them near Dacca.

"His internal administration was equally mild and beneficent.

"Every day he held open Court for administering justice and redressed wrongs very promptly. This he regarded as his most important duty. In his own jagir he ordered that everything collected by the revenue officers above the fixed rent should be returned to the cultivators.

"But Ibrahim Khan's character had some redeeming features; the English traders call him 'the most famously just and good nabob', and the Muslim historian records that 'he did not allow even an ant to be oppressed'. He personally administered justice, was free from venality and caprice, and promoted agriculture and commerce.

"Two days in the week he [Murshid Quli Khan] administered justice in person, and was so impartial in his decisions and rigid in their execution that no one dared to commit oppression . . . . He did not place absolute confidence in his accountants, but himself examined the daily accounts of the receipts, expenditure and balances and then signed them.

"Under him Bengal entered on a career of peace and marvellous material prosperity."—J. N. Sarkar.

I am tired of the parrot cry that it is the *pax Britannica* which is mainly responsible for over-population—that frequent domestic wars do not now decimate the people and that plague and pestilence have become things of the past. It is true that a Timur, a Nadir Shah, or an Ahmed Shah Abdali at intervals of a century or two made onsets; but their ravages seldom reacted beyond the confines of Delhi or some of the capital cities. As far as Bengal is concerned the Mahratta incursions during the viceroyalty of Aliverty devastated the districts of Burdwan and portions of Bankura and their duration was only for eleven years. The petty wars, more properly squabbles, between the Moguls and the Pathans, which lasted at intervals from the time of Akbar to that of Jehangir, were also more or less localised near the seats of Government—their effects were

scarcely felt in the remote outlying villages. European historians, used to deal with the "wars of the Roses," "the seven years' war" or the "Napoleonic wars", are apt to confound the temporary effects of the petty skirmishes in Bengal, Behar and Orissa with the former.

Indeed, it is the fashion with a certain class of English writers on India to depict Bengal in sombre hues at the time of the battle of Plassey and to insinuate that the Bengalis were rescued from the oppression and rapacity of their rulers and that the advent of the British was a Godsend. Fortunately there are impartial authorities having extensive local knowledge, who have presented us with the obverse of the picture. Says Malcolm :

"The country of Bengal has ever been famous for the wealth and talent of the higher classes of its Hindu inhabitants; and we find, throughout its history, that these have filled the chief offices of the state. This was the case at the period of which we are treating. The managers and renters—of whom Ramnarain, the governor of the province of Patna, and Raja Ram, the manager of Midnapore, were the principal—were almost all Hindus. Nor were the station and influence of this tribe less in the army and at court. Monick Chund, who had been governor of Calcutta, held a high military rank, and Roydullab, the dewan, or minister of finance, had great influence which was increased by his being intimately associated with Jugget Seit, the representative of the richest soucar, or banking firm, in India; and who, through means of his riches and extensive connections, possessed equal influence at Lucknow and Delhi as at Moorshedabad."—*Life of Robert, Lord Clive*.

Lord Clive testifies that "the city of Moorshedabad is as extensive, populous, and rich as the city of London; with this difference, that there are individuals in the first possessing infinitely greater property than any in the last city."—Evidence before the Parliamentary Committee.

Speaking of Omichund and Juggat Set, two rich bankers under Nawab Siraj-ud-dowla, Torrens observes :

"The notoriety of their opulence, the habitual security in which they lived, and their great political power, is in itself a comprehensive refutation of the ignorant pretence that these Governments were the mere transient and capricious alternations of despotism. Credit is brittle ware at best, and needs all the care and shelter of what is esteemed the subtlest system of civilisation to preserve it unharmed; and banking is

precisely that part of the credit system most susceptible of injury from the breath of violence, and most sure to perish at the very apprehension of arbitrary usage. The bankers of India could no more have accumulated their vast wealth, and maintained their importance in the State, had they not been exempt from the fear of outrage, than the exotics, we have borrowed from their land, whose luxuriance we protect in houses of glass, could gain or preserve that luxuriance if exposed to the rude caprices of our fickle weather. The universal safety of oriental Bankers is still more instructive when we learn that their riches generally lay in securities of various kinds, which they held of men of every class, from the trader to the prince. Without their aid, no Government ventured to undertake permanent or expensive schemes. Their friendship was courted by the Minister, and purchased by favours from the throne."—*Empire in Asia* (1872).

### III—BENGAL, AS SHE IS TO-DAY.

I have given above an account of Bengal culled mainly from European writers immediately before the battle of Plassey, as it is oftentimes the custom to quote chance opinions of Governor-Generals and other high authorities to prove that Bengal, or for the matter of that, India was rescued from tyranny and rapine.<sup>2</sup> This no doubt is purposely meant to apply a sort of salve to the qualms of conscience of an average Englishman who is supremely ignorant of Indian affairs. It is conveniently forgotten or ignored that Bengal at any rate was contented and prosperous in the pre-British days, and according to the testimony of European writers, was overflowing with milk and honey. It is only after the battle of Plassey that the "Plassey drain" began (Vol. I. p. 432) and the land got exhausted of its wealth.

It is again constantly dinned into our ears that under the *Pax Britannica*, the people do not get killed by the constant wars prevailing previously, and *famines and pestilences have become*

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<sup>2</sup> "It is a proud phrase to use, but it is a true one, that we have bestowed blessings upon millions . . . . The ploughman is again in every quarter turning up a soil which had for many seasons never been stirred except by the hoofs of predatory cavalry."—Lord Hastings, February, 1819.

. . . This only applies to the transitional period following in the wake of the decay of the Moghul Empire.

*things of the past.* It is but natural that unless they practise birth-control and thus impose the Malthusian check on population, they must die like flies. This is a fiction propagated by the poet of Imperialism and others of his ilk.

A cursory glance through Chapter VII will convince any honest reader that these scourges which levy such a huge toll every year in ill-fated Bengal were scarcely known six decades ago ; somehow or other they have synchronised with British rule. Tuberculosis has no doubt been endemic in India from time immemorial ; it is mentioned as Râja Yakshâ in the ancient Ayurvedic works but its victims were few and confined chiefly to old age ; whereas this scourge is now spreading like wild fire.

As has been shown above the spread of malaria has followed in the wake of drainage obstruction due to railway embankments. Dr. Bentley, while laying stress upon this aspect, has not hesitated to call it also the *hunger-disease*. Malnutrition which brings on debilitated constitution and deprives the victim of resisting power is equally responsible for the havoc of malaria and tuberculosis. Water famine has also followed in the wake of British rule. The daily papers of late (April, May and June, 1934) contain bitter wails and lamentations from various mofussil districts on the scarcity of drinking water. Human beings and the cattle drink from the same muddy pools. I have just returned from a tour in the Sunderban regions (May, 1934). Extensive tanks (miniature lakes) excavated by Raja Pratapaditya and the local Zeminders in the bygone ages have silted up and some have become choked with weeds over which the cattle graze. The piety of the former landlords—Hindu and Moslem—made it a code of religion to secure a supply of good drinking water. Rani Bhawani of pious memory scattered broadcast hundreds of tanks in her extensive Zemindaries, Natore, Rajshahi and elsewhere ; her unworthy descendants, however, have allowed these to fall out of repair. Now the Zemindaries have passed into the hands of the absentee Calcutta proprietors, who never look after the welfare and health of the tenants (*cf.* Vol. I. p. 14 *et seq.*). Neither



does the government think it any concern of its to see that millions do not suffer from water-famine and die of cholera. In fact the callous indifference of our rulers is the most lamentable episode in this respect.

Bengal at any rate was seldom decimated by domestic wars in the pre-British days, and early marriage was also in vogue. The growing increase of population is no doubt a cause of anxiety and the land is becoming congested. English writers naturally fight shy of one important aspect of the economic problem, nay, they are reluctant to admit it. During the British regime the home or cottage industries have been one by one ruined—tens of thousands of weavers and spinners, lohars (iron-smiths), braziers, carters, boatmen, and crews have been thrown out of employment (*vide* Vol. I. pp. 353, 365, 372). In order to eke out their miserable existence they have turned to the plough as a last recourse ; hence the keen competition for land with its attendant evils (see p. 164). The British rulers of India have all along looked on with glee, nay, they have helped, the ruin of our cottage industries, as their sympathies have naturally been enlisted on the side of Lancashire, Birmingham and Sheffield. Had India a national government she would all along have taken care to safeguard her own interests and by spread of mass and technical education with model factories attached to technological institutions enabled her people to stand on their own legs and meet the keen competition.

But our rulers waxing fat upon the produce of the ryot looked on not only with stolid indifference but with grim satisfaction as they found that their "home" industries were forging ahead due to the political supremacy they had acquired.

It is exactly from this point of view that British rule suffers in the estimation of the Indian people. Prof. Seeley rightly says that the wars in which Clive and his successors got involved on the soil of India were meant to counteract the designs of France and latterly of Russia. Whatever motives might have actuated the policy, the glaring fact

remains that India has come to be regarded as a dependency or a "possession" in the eye of the average Britisher. Let us for a moment suppose that France or Russia, one of the rival powers, is in place of England. I am by no means enamoured of the policy of France towards her dependencies on the north of Africa or in the Indo-Chinese area. In spite of her slogan—*liberté, égalité et fraternité*, Republican France, I am afraid, will suffer by comparison with the methods of the British in India; nor need I hold any brief for Russia under the Czars or under the Soviet regime. But one fact stands in bold relief. Neither France nor Russia has been an industrial country, at least not in the sense in which England is. Had any of them been in possession of India her cottage industries would not have been killed and bread would not have been snatched away from millions of her artisans and handicraftsmen as indicated above (*cf.* Vol. I. p. 372). They being agricultural countries would not have been instrumental in bringing about the economic prostration of India.

It is significant that whenever a new province has come under British rule, almost simultaneously her home or cottage industries have been destroyed at the instigation of powerful British interests. The way in which the salt manufacture of Oude and Bengal has been crushed out of being is at once a disgrace and a scandal to the Indian Government. Mr. Irwin, whose commiseration for the poor of Oude has led him to break through official reserve, says:

"The three principal industries under native rule were cotton-weaving, salt-making, and spirit-distilling. Of these, the first has been crippled by Manchester competition; the second has been annihilated, so far as legislation can annihilate it, and the occupation of a numerous caste destroyed . . . The salt manufacture having been crushed, £400,000 worth of salt is imported annually." (*Italics are mine.*)—*The Garden of India*, p. 30.

Sir R. Temple says:

"All these tracts (Malabar and Coromandel coasts) are still made to yield salt, except the delta of the Ganges and the upper parts of the Bay of Bengal. In these excepted tracts, the manufacture of the salt, once so extensive, has been suppressed, in order that an import

*duty might be levied on the salt imported from England.*"<sup>3</sup> (Italics are mine).—*India in 1880*, p. 237.

Thus, bread has been taken out of the mouths of hundreds of thousands. The Cheshire labourer can make his voice heard, but the groans of the poverty-stricken millions of India do not reach those shores. Mr. H. N. Brailsford, who has seen India with his own eyes, has some very impartial and sound views on this point, in his work, *Property or Peace* (1934):

"I venture, none the less, to argue that this belief (that our rule has been an unmixed blessing to India) is a delusion. We certainly brought what are called the 'blessings of Western Civilisation,' meaning chiefly order and applied science, but we more than balanced these gifts by the injury that we inflicted on India's will by our autocracy, and on the self-respect of a sensitive and courteous people by our racial arrogance. Through a century and a half the powers of action of this people went not merely undeveloped, they were lamed and fettered, partly by our bureaucratic rule, but also by our real superiority in applied science and the arts of organisation. India suffered these blessings; she could not react to them, test them, modify them, adapt them to her needs and character. Hers in this modern world is a startling and painful case of arrested development. Though we brought our railways and our machines, the effect of our conquest was rather to retard India's adaptation to the industrial age. But for our coming, it is arguable that some vigorous native power, perhaps the Mahrattas, would eventually have brought order into the transient chaos caused by Mogul decay. India would then, like Japan, have turned what she freely borrowed from the west to her own uses.

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"There is even to-day no system of universal compulsory education, and most of such elementary schooling as is provided for the masses is of pitiful quality. To this, in part at least, we must refer the ill-health of this population, whose average expectation of life is 23·5 years against 54 years in England, the slow progress of the campaigns against malaria and other preventable diseases, and infantile death rates in the larger towns that range through figures four and even six times higher than that of London.

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<sup>3</sup> So early as 1833 we find Mr. Wilbroham moving a "clause prohibiting the exclusive manufacture and sale of salt by the Government of India, the object of which motion was to secure a new market for the salt of Cheshire."—Wilson's continuation of Mill, vol. ix., p. 381.

"In imposing Free Trade on India its British rulers doubtless believed that they followed the dictates of economic wisdom. Science was kind to Lancashire.

"The heaviest injury of this free trade policy fell, however, not on India's capitalists, but on her handicraft workers. Very gradually, yet by an irresistible doom, the weaver, the potter and the smith were reduced to penury and despair by the competition of British machines. The deficiencies of transport delayed their fate, but to-day when motor buses carry the housewives of the remotest villages into the towns to do their marketing, the end for these skilled craftsmen is in sight. This was, the reader may object, inevitable in any event: the machine and not the empire is the villain. No: if machine industry had been developed earlier in India by Indians, it would have provided occupation on a much greater scale for the displaced hand workers.

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"Our policy, which in effect retarded the growth of native machine industry, and destroyed native handicrafts, drove the population to a single resource, *the cultivation of the soil*. The over-crowding has been progressive, for wherever research has investigated the history of the land, it is evident that the acreage of the typical holding has dwindled steadily from generation to generation, till in many regions it cannot yield an adequate subsistence.

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"And, in fact, over wide areas of India they live as they must, on the barest margin of survival, in mud huts, with a few mats and pots as their sole possession, often without a change of clothing, on a diet of rice and pulses that supplies a minimum of energy to their slight and emaciated frames. In some districts Nature seems to have bred a race who can sustain their puny bodies on an allowance of proteids and vitamins that would nourish a shadow. They rear their malarious children, who never taste milk, to a heritage of ignorance and debt, enjoyed through half the normal span of life. One is forced in these villages to realise the pitiable inadequacy of the slow, small-scale reforms as yet attempted. Nothing will be of much avail till a revolutionary plan, conceived by an audacious imagination and executed by a ruthless will, breaks up these little holdings, imposes a rational system of husbandry, produces with a fraction of the present rural labour-force a vastly richer harvest from the soil, and transfers the rest of this wasted labour-force to industry and to services that bring comfort and health. Such plans are not conceived in Delhi to-day by Anglo-Indians: they will not be framed by any Indian Ministry that can issue from the Round Table. I know only one place where such plans are made to-day: it is Moscow."

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## CHAPTER XIII.

### IMPERIALISM—ANCIENT AND MODERN.

"By the great bulk of our countrymen, Hindostan is looked upon as a large country which affords a convenient place for the younger sons of respectable families to acquire fortunes. About the people we make ourselves perfectly easy".—Quoted by Sir James Caird.

"One people may keep another as a warren or preserve for its own use, a place to make money in, a human cattle farm to be worked for the profit of its own inhabitants. . . ."—J. S. Mill: *Representative Government*, Chap. xviii.

The growth of modern civilization "consists essentially in the development of man's command over nature. For many thousands of years, generation after generation of mankind went on living in the possession of vast potential resources of production which they lacked the knowledge to use. There was coal under the earth; there were rich mineral deposits of many other kinds. Vast latent powers of fertility existed in the soil and in the unexplored possibilities of breeding and selection of crops and stock. The powers of steam and electricity were there, unknown and unused. To-day, mankind has knowledge of these things; and for good and ill, modern western civilization is the outcome of this knowledge. But how much remains unknown; and of what is known, how small a proportion of the human race has yet been able to take advantage! The great majority of the earth's inhabitants are still living in India and China and Africa under essentially primitive conditions; and even in the more developed countries far less than full use is being made of the constantly expanding powers of production."

"Yet it is in the nature of these powers to expand fast and continuously, as soon as any section of the human race has escaped from the bonds and traditions of a static form of society. One invention leads to another in an endless chain of development; and science . . . is constantly throwing off

discoveries which become of the greatest importance in the economic sphere. The new producing capacity having taken firm root, if the world really recognised the brotherhood of man . . . all countries would be working together to promote the economic development of the world as a whole and to lift the inhabitants of Asia and Africa out of their secular indigence ;"<sup>1</sup> and in this process, apparently philanthropic, they would have benefited themselves.

But unfortunately man's moral progress has lagged enormously behind the development of his powers for production. He has even lost his living faith in the doctrines and ethical principles preached by Confucius, Buddha, Socrates and Christ. While the triumphs of modern science, its railroads, and steamships and aeroplanes, the telegraph, the telephone and the wireless, have made intercourse extremely easy between the peoples of the world, and tend to make it one social and economic unit, sectarian intolerance, colour prejudices, racial hatred, international rivalries and cultural conflicts have disfigured a large part of the fair surface of the earth. These new instruments and powers are in fact being handled by a generation of men whose mental outlook is still in practice as barbarous as that of the ancient Huns, or the conquering central Asian hordes of the middle ages, or the African slave-hunters of the seventeenth century. If rightly understood and utilised "this progress in productive capacity should have taken us, in every country, not excepting the countries of the Far East, a long way towards solving the problems of poverty and should have made the whole world richer, healthier, happier, more intelligent and more confident about the future" (Cole). But the baser and coarser elements in man, the instinctive desire of the strong to exploit the weak have pushed completely in the background such noble precepts as "Love thy neighbour as thyself" or "Do unto others as you wish others would do unto you"; though curiously enough his economic

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<sup>1</sup> The quotations here are taken from Cole's *The Intelligent Man's Guide through World Chaos*. Pp. 51, 112.

salvation lies in accepting and acting up to these ancient elevating doctrines.<sup>2</sup> The result has been the advent of a new kind of imperialism, under the banner of which the industrial powers of the West and their still more efficient pupil in the East—Japan—have brought the peoples of Asia and Africa under subjugation or have carved out spheres of economic influence. The motive behind is not far to seek—it is to secure a protected market for industrial goods, exclusive control of new material resources and supply of raw materials by the cheap labour of men kept under subhuman conditions of existence.<sup>3</sup>

India has been under the heels of the strongest Imperial Power in the world for more than a century and a half. Attempts to release this strangle-hold are resisted on grounds which are themselves sufficient to condemn the whole system. The diehards in England point out—(1) that India is a miserably poor country where the people are living on conditions of semi-barbarism ; (2) that the vast mass of people are ignorant of politics and too illiterate to understand the affairs of Government ; (3) that the English rule is good for uplifting this semi-barbaric mass of mankind and that it has already achieved a great spread of Western civilization amongst certain sections of the people ; (4) that the Indian, as such, is yet incapable of self-rule and requires for his internal and external protection the strength of the British army. What self-respecting Briton will not hang down his head in shame if such is the result of his rule extending over 175 years !

#### I—BRITISH IMPERIALISM.

The diehard politicians of to-day are no better than the demagogues of ancient Rome—the “highest bidders of bread

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<sup>2</sup> The acute distress in all parts of the world to-day leads inevitably to the conclusion, that in our interacting economic system, you cannot but share the misfortune of your neighbour.

<sup>3</sup> As extreme examples of the unthinkable cruelty and barbarism of which modern Imperialists are capable, I may cite the inhuman administration of Belgian Congo under King Leopold and the Denshawli affair and the Jalianwala Bag massacre (Amritsar).

and circuses." Cæsar's supremacy could only be purchased by colossal bribery of the citizens of the Eternal City. As I read Antony's oration<sup>4</sup> I am reminded of the heroics of Mr. Winston Churchill and Lord Rothermere. Mr. C. F. Andrews thus writes of the mischievous propaganda in England to maintain the British Imperialism in India in all its brutality :

"Few things have been more disturbing and disconcerting during the past year than the alarming growth of anti-Indian propaganda in all the countries of the west and the extreme difficulty of counteracting it by publishing the truth. Not merely in Great Britain but in America and in every western country this propaganda is being carried on.

"In England, the growth of hostility towards Indian aspirations has been vast. It has been subsidised by those who have very large resources at their command and are quite openly ruthless in their methods. The greatest offender of all is the London 'Daily Mail' with its large group of syndicated papers in the provinces; Lord Rothermere is cynically brutal in the arguments which he employs in the leading columns of his own daily paper. A head line will appear for two or three days, announcing that Lord Rothermere is going to occupy the middle column with an important article on India on such and such a date. Then the article itself appears with big head-lines to call attention to it, and a notice is placed on the outside page in red letters. Street placards also call attention to it in big letters as the main subject of interest for the day.

"The article is usually of the pre-war type declaring that India 'is our own possession and we must not lose that which our ancestors won for us by the sword.'—(I am paraphrasing his leading words). Imperialist declarations as crude and gross as this form the stock-in-trade of his appeal. In the second place, the claim is made that one-fifth of the income of every English household depends upon Englishmen maintaining their hold on the Indian Empire which is the keystone of the British Empire. 'Once let India out', the cry is raised by Lord Lloyd and Winston Churchill alike, 'and the whole British Empire falls to pieces'.

<sup>4</sup> *Ant.* Here is the will, and under Cæsar's seal.  
To every Roman citizen he gives,  
To every several man, seventy five drachmas.

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Moreover, he hath left you all his walks,  
His private arbours and new-planted orchards,  
On this side Tiber; he hath left them you,  
And to your heirs for ever.



"The third argument which Lord Rothermere uses is that of unemployment. 'We built up our population in Great Britain on the money and trade we derived from the Indian Empire. If we lose that Empire which our forefathers won for us, then instead of two to three million unemployed we shall have six million on our hands. England is over-populated if we have not got India with its great wealth to fall back on'.

"I have mentioned the name of Lord Rothermere as one of the Big Four in the newspaper world. Lord Beaverbrook often runs him close in the inflammatory things he publishes in the 'Daily Express'. Then comes the 'Morning Post', which for many months past has made 'India' a scare headline running across two columns; if the very least bit of news comes through about a Hindu-Muslim riot or something to do with untouchability in which Hinduism can be blamed, the news is written up with warnings that Great Britain cannot 'desert' India. It is pointed out that it is impossible in a country where such dreadful things have happened to give the enemies of the voiceless masses Swaraj or independence. India is a 'Great Dependency' and it will be long time before any step further can be taken in entrusting responsibility to Indians.

"Here again the crudest pre-war conception is taken of the relation of India towards England. The idea of conquest predominates, and no other conception is even conceivable. The phrase 'our Indian Empire' is repeated day after day."

The *Statesman* (Oct. 3, 1934), in a leaderette, observes :

"Mr. Aidan Crawley has contributed to the *Sunday Despatch* a deplorable article on India. We are indebted for this information to the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, which reprints the article and writes an indignant leader. We are not sure that our contemporary is wise to have given it this prominence, for few people in Britain will regard this Kent cricketer, who, we believe, crossed India last cold weather on his way round the world, as an authority. Nevertheless, the *Sunday Despatch* is one of the Rothermere papers with a mammoth circulation, and it is a

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. "Mr. Hearst in America (like Lord Beaverbrook in England) is the master of a whole chain of newspapers. Views of life like those just quoted are carried with all the powerful suggestibility which the modern newspaper can exercise simultaneously to perhaps a hundred organs scattered across the vast North American continent. . . . . Where the academic economist can reach ten minds, Mr. Hearst can reach a million."—Norman Angell.

"The two largest groups of our daily papers (the Beaverbrooks and Rothermeres) are owned by very wealthy men having very extended financial interests,"—*Ibid.*

grave scandal that such ignorant stuff should be allowed to see the light."

Mr. Winston Churchill, who has made himself the mouth-piece of rabid imperialism, has evidently inherited it from his late father, who was Secretary of State for India for a short time.<sup>6</sup> He like his father has only the unemployment at "home" before his mind's eye. The welfare of 350 millions of Indians counts as feather's weight with him. Anyhow they must be forced to buy Manchester cottons and not allowed to build up their textile industry. The half-a-century which has since elapsed has made no difference in the son's outlook.

Mr. Churchill, when he held high office in the Cabinet as Secretary of State for the Dominions and Colonies at the time of the Imperial Conference in 1921, said:

"India was now coming into our affairs and councils as a partner, a powerful partner. We well knew how tremendous was the contribution which India made in the war in 1914, how when there was no other means of filling a portion of the front by men from any other part of the whole world there came the two splendid Indian corps which were almost annihilated in the mud and the shell-fire of that terrible winter in Flanders."

Again:

"We owed India that deep debt and we looked forward confidently to the days when the Indian Government and people would have assumed fully and completely their Dominion Status." Mr. Churchill was profuse in his gratitude to India. But politicians have short memories. The poet in bitter anguish of mind exclaims:

"Earth is sick and Heaven is weary  
Of the hollow words that  
States and Kingdoms utter  
When they talk of truth and justice."

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<sup>6</sup> "Just for one moment look to India. India is your one great free market; it is the one great port of the world where your manufactures enter without being hindered by any duties. Without India, the unemployed at Birmingham would reach such enormous numbers as to become perfectly dangerous to social order."—R. Churchill, Oct. 23/85.

## II—OTTAWA PACT.

Years ago Henry Fawcett said that India's partnership with England is illustrated by the adage that unequal partnership is always disadvantageous to the weaker side as in Æsop's lion entering into partnership with the fox. India is pulled along at the tail of England. This is well evidenced by the Ottawa Pact under which India "enjoys" Imperial Preference. The Director of Commercial Intelligence (Dr. Meek) has recently published an account of India's export to England. It is found that in the major heads, *e.g.* rice, jute, steel, pig iron, etc., there has been no appreciable gain ; nor has there been any larger demand for Indian coffee and tea.

"Anticipations regarding vegetable oils have not been realised. Actuals fell terribly short of expectations. Protagonists of the Agreement have always waved linseed as a trump card. No doubt, our exports of linseed to the United Kingdom have shown an encouraging rise, but the reason thereon is to be sought not so much in Preference as in the fact that the crop in Argentine and U. S. had failed. As a result, not only the United Kingdom but nearly all the foreign countries increased their purchases from India. As a matter of fact, the increase in our exports of linseed to non-Empire foreign countries in a very large number of cases has been greater than the increase in our exports to the United Kingdom. It would be rather difficult for advocates of Imperial Preference to explain away the figures of India's exports of linseed in the year 1933-34."

On the other hand, India has to buy British steel at higher price, because German and Belgian steel has been kept out by a high tariff. Continental countries are now having their revenge by erecting tariff walls or by taking retaliatory measures against the Indian exports. India has thus been a loser in every way. In fact, England's commercial relations with India may be summed up as "Heads we win, tails you lose."

Mr. Nalini Ranjan Sarkar, in an able and exhaustive analysis of Ottawa Agreement, sums up thus : "The conclu-

sion seems to be inevitable that the United Kingdom has gained a better advantage than India. The most disquieting feature of the Ottawa Agreement is that it sets definite limitations to Indian people in their choice in the matter of concluding advantageous commercial treaties with non-Empire countries so as to secure possible economic advantages in her foreign trade. To that extent the loss to the Indian consumers, who are also producers to a great extent of primary commodities, has been considerable indeed."—*Calcutta Review*, Oct., 1934.

The Report of the Indian Trade Commissioner of Hamburg also goes to confirm the above conclusions :

The report under reference will surely be an eye-opener to the supporters of the Ottawa Agreement. Dr. Meek's report attempted to show that India's exports to Britain have increased as a direct result of the operations of the Ottawa Preferences. The increased exports of raw jute, cotton, hides and oil-seeds to the different European countries during the year 1933-34, without any stimulating factor like the Ottawa Pact, conclusively prove the hollowness of the arguments adduced by the Ottawa champions. On the contrary, this discriminatory preference to Britain has been responsible for the ousting of Indian tea by the inferior Java tea in the Continental markets.

### III.—TEA AND COFFEE.

The tea restriction scheme which embraces all tea-producing countries and which is now in full operation may be regarded as responsible for either stabilising the position reached in 1932, so far as imports are concerned or even causing a decline in those imports during the year under review. France and Germany are the two main countries in Northern Europe excluding Russia, which import tea in any quantities. The former reduced her purchases of Indian tea in 1933 by nearly 50 per cent. as compared with the previous year. China tea has not only maintained its previous position, but even improved on it during 1933. But the most noticeable feature

is the phenomenal increase in the import into France of Java tea.

The Tariff Board recently appointed had for its object the devising of means for giving protection to the Indian iron and steel industry ; but it took good care to consider the interests of the British Steel Federation first. This initial weakness of the Board has resulted in immense loss to India. Secondly, the Government of India's extraordinary concern for the British steel manufacturer can by no means be said to have been in keeping with real autonomy. If the British manufacturer required protection against the Continental manufacturer there were the British Government to devise ways and means for it. The Indian Government were not entitled to make any sacrifice for this purpose. Lastly, the Finance Member's threat to withdraw the Bill in case the British industry was not favoured in the way he wanted cuts right across the whole conception of autonomy.

The fact that there were some Indian members on the Board makes the situation worse. For, there are always at the command of the Imperial Government Indians ready to barter away the country's best interests at its bidding. For a handful of silver and for a riband to stick in his coat the place hunter will be ever ready to do the dirty job. It is, indeed, significant that Australia, a member of the British Commonwealth, makes short work of Ottawa Pact, as she shuts out Lancashire cotton by a tariff wall. The recent Indo-British trade pact has hardened even the Ottawa Pact inasmuch as the very few privileges given to India under the Ottawa Pact have been snatched away. Indian autonomy has vanished.

#### IV—FALL OF EMPIRES.

Slaves from conquered countries in ancient days were dragged behind the chariot of Imperial conquerors ; and we have its counterpart to-day in the idea that the teeming, starving, dumb millions of India must for ever be tied to the Imperial chariot—that the aspirations of their politically conscious elements must be smothered ! We read of "the Senate and

Roman magistrates" looking on the provinces as the estates of the Roman people in whose prosperity they took but little interest.<sup>7</sup> And the British people voice the same feelings when they speak of "Our Indian Empire."

Vain delusion! No nation ever became great by ruining and plundering subject peoples. Christian holy fathers uttered benedictions upon the exploits and atrocities of Cortez and Pizarro; and shiploads of silver poured into the treasury of the Spanish monarch. Yet this sudden accession of wealth coupled with the manner of acquiring it proved the undoing of Spain: within half a century of the abdication of Charles V, Spain was reduced to a second rate power wallowing in ignorance and superstition. The greatness of a nation springs from the moral and intellectual qualities of its citizens, and when this moral fibre is sapped by vicious thoughts and unjust deeds associated invariably with the government of peoples held under subjugation by force of arms, the fall is inevitable. History teems with instances of periodical ups and downs, rise and fall of great nations. Archæologists have brought to light sanitary arrangements in the cities of ancient Crete which rival modern ones. The recent excavations at Mohenjo Daro have revealed an astounding culture flourishing between 4000 and 2000 B.C., when the inhabitants dwelt in great cities built of burnt bricks with wide roads laid at right angles, and having an elaborate system of drainage, water-supply and public baths. The New Zealander watching from the broken arches of London bridge the ruins of the great city is no mere poetic fancy!

Awful prognostications naturally arise in the mind of man when he realises his own littleness. In the days of Strabo, there was an epitaph on the grave of a Persian monarch:

"Oh, man! I am Cyrus, king of Persia

Envy not the little patch of earth which covers me."

When England was flushed with a new spirit of Renaissance,

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<sup>7</sup> Rostovtzeff: *A History of the Ancient World*, Vol. II, p. 88.

and the material accession of new wealth, the poet Shirley struck a warning note :

“Sceptre and crown must tumble down  
And in the dust be equal made  
With the lowly scythe and spade.”

And again the great poet sang :

“Imperial Cæsar dead and turned to clay  
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away!”

In our own times, mighty imperial dynasties have tumbled down—the Hohenzollerns and the Habsburgs, where are they! On the thrones of the Romanoffs, and of Sulieman the Magnificent, sit now upstarts with revolutionary ideas of statecraft!

The fiat had gone forth—*Delenda est Carthago* ; but when Scipio beheld Carthage in flames, his soul was softened by reflections on the instability of fortune, and he could not avoid anticipating a time when Rome herself should experience the same calamities as those which had befallen her unfortunate competitor. He vented his feelings, by quoting from Homer the well-known lines in which Hector predicts the fall of Troy :

“Yet come it will, the day decreed by fates ;  
(How my heart trembles, while my tongue relates !)  
The day when thou, imperial Troy, must bend,  
And see thy warriors fall, thy glories end.”

In the same melancholy strain also sings our Sanskrit poet :

यदुपतेः क्व गता मथुरापुरी  
रघुपतेः क्व गतं चीत्तरकोशलम्  
इति विचिन्त्य कुरु खमनः स्थिरम्  
नसदिदं जगदित्यवधारय ।  
चलच्चित्तं चक्षुषितं चलन्मीव न यौवनं,  
चलाचलमिदं सर्वं कीर्तिर्यस्य स जीवति ।

[Where is Mathura, the city of the king of the Yadus? Where is Oude, the seat of the kingdom of the Raghus? Consequently put your mind at ease. Everything in this world is transitory ; good deeds alone survive.]

But behind this evanescent glories of Empires, there may lie a record of human achievement of a permanent value though less spectacular ; and so sings Mary Coleridge :

"Egypt's might is tumbled down  
Down a-down the deeps of thought;  
Greece is fallen and Troy town,  
Glorious Rome hath lost her crown,  
Venice's pride is nought.

But the dreams their children dreamed  
Fleeting, unsubstantial, vain,  
Shadowy as the shadows seemed,  
Airy nothings, as they deemed,  
These remain."

#### V—GROWTH OF NATIONALISM IN INDIA.

"History, in the ordinary sense of the word, is almost unknown in Indian literature. For, according to the eminent French philosopher, Cousin, this great deficiency in Sanskrit literature is due, in no inconsiderable measure, to the doctrines propounded in the *Bhagavadgītā* itself."—*Introduction to Bhagavadgītā* by K. T. Telang.

Paul Deussen in one of his articles said some years back that "Vedānta has proved the curse of material progress in India."

Foreign invaders of which we have historical records, say, from the time of Alexander, have always had an easy time of it. The Hindus have never been able to present a bold united front. As Seeley has pointed out, there is no miracle in a handful of Europeans establishing their sway over this vast peninsula. Centuries before their advent the Moslem Sultans on the *masnad* of Delhi had planted their banners from Kabul to Chittagong and Delhi to Bijapur and Golconda in the Deccan. In fact, the map of India in 1526 when Babar ascended the throne shows the Moslem sovereignty over a larger area than even British India.

"Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's" has been also the Hindu's attitude. He has always been unconcerned



as to who rules over him. There is absolutely no record of foreign conquest in Sanskrit literature ; only from indirect and far-fetched evidences, we have to glean that the *Yavanas* (i.e. the Greeks) ever besieged an Indian province.<sup>8</sup> Matthew Arnold has fully entered into the spirit of the Hindu's absolute non-chalance in the following stanza :

"The East bow'd low before the blast,  
In patient deep disdain ;  
She let the legions thunder past,  
And plunged in thought again."

The Greek philosophers who accompanied Alexander express their admiration at the other-worldliness of the Indian sages—the gymnosophists. Nay 'Philip's warlike son' himself marvels at their supreme indifference to affairs mundane.

"We have amongst us a sage called Dandamis, whose home is the woods, where he lies on a pallet of leaves, and where he has nigh at hand the fountain of peace, whereof he drinks, sucking, as it were, the pure breast of a mother.

"King Alexander, accordingly, when he heard of all this, was desirous of learning the doctrines of the sect, and so he sent for this Dandamis, as being their teacher and president.

"The son of the mighty god Zeus, King Alexander, who is the sovereign lord of all men, asks you to go to him, and if you comply, he will reward you with great and splendid gifts, but if you refuse will cut off your head."

"Dandamis, with a complacent smile, heard him to the end, but did not so much as lift up his head from his couch of leaves, and while still retaining his recumbent attitude returned this scornful answer : 'Know this, however, that what Alexander offers me, and the gifts he promises, are all things to me utterly useless ; but the things which I prize, and find

<sup>8</sup> e.g. In the *Mahabhasya* of Patanjali (a commentary on Panini) occurs the significant line :

अरुणत् यवनः शक्तिम् ।

*Yavana* refers to the Greeks. Cf. *Yavanas in Early Indian Inscription* by O. Stein, in *Indian Culture*, Jan., 1935.

of real use and worth, are these leaves which are my house, these blooming plants which supply me with dainty food, and the water which is my drink, while all other possessions and things, which are amassed with anxious care, are wont to prove ruinous to those who amass them, and cause only sorrow and vexation, with which every poor mortal is fully fraught. Should Alexander cut off my head, he cannot also destroy my soul. Let Alexander, then, terrify with these threats those who wish for gold and for wealth, and who dread death, for against us these weapons are both alike powerless, since the Bragmanes neither love gold nor fear death. Go, then, and tell Alexander this: Dandamis has no need of aught that is yours, and, therefore, will not go to you, but if you want anything from Dandamis come you to him.'

"Alexander, on receiving from Onesikratês a report of the interview, felt a stronger desire than ever to see Dandamis, who, though old and naked, was the only antagonist in whom he, the conqueror of many nations, had found more than his match."—*Ancient India as described by Megasthenês and Arrian*—McCrinkle's Translation.

It is only under the British regime that the germs of national consciousness has been slowly and silently growing. Burke's impeachment of Warren Hastings and the classical speech on Conciliation with America with its glowing passages full of political wisdom naturally impress the Indian youth.<sup>9</sup> The great civil war with its slogan "No Taxation without Representation" and which culminated in the decapitation of King Charles, made short work of the Right Divine of earthly Sovereigns. The French Revolution which followed a century and a quarter later is only a revised edition of the English exemplar as Buckle has pointed out. The declaration of the Rights of Man substituted Reason for Tradition as the

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. "I do not know the method of drawing up an indictment against a whole people."

"A great Empire and little minds go ill together."

guiding principle of Man. In short English literature with its liberalising and humanising influence has had its repercussion on Indian life and mentality.

But why express surprise at the complete absence of ideas of nationality in India? It is a matter of recent growth even in Europe, heralded by the French Revolution. Says Gooch :

"The eighteenth century was the age of cosmopolitanism, and nowhere was the soil more favourable to its growth than in Germany. Almost without exception her leading minds owned allegiance to humanity alone. In a land cut up into innumerable petty states, mostly ill-governed, particularism was the instinct of the masses, cosmopolitanism the creed of the *élite*. Excluded from power and responsibility, men of liberal views felt themselves in closer association with reformers and thinkers in other lands than with their own countrymen. To such minds patriotism meant stagnation, a mulish antagonism to the stimulating challenge of foreign influences. 'German nationalism,' declared Nicolai bluntly, 'is a political monstrosity.' 'To be praised as a zealous patriot', wrote Lessing, 'is the last thing I desire—a patriot, that is, who would teach me to forget that I must be a citizen of the world.' The attitude of the leaders of the *Aufklärung* was shared by the men who ushered in a new period in the intellectual life of Germany. 'If we find a place where we can rest with our belongings,' wrote the youthful Goethe, 'a field to support us, a house to shelter us, have we not a Fatherland? *Ubi bene, ibi patria.*' 'I write as a citizen of the world who serves no prince,' echoed the youthful Schiller. 'I lost my Fatherland to exchange it for the great world. What is the greatest of nations but a fragment?'

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"But it was not till the disastrous campaign which opened at Jena and closed at Tilsit that the rotten foundations of the Prussian state were exposed to the gaze of all the world, and even the King realised that he must break with the past."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. "The ripples of Baylen had reached even the minds of Austrian politicians and they had no further to go, and the Austrian common

Even after Jena and Tilsit there was an interview of Napoleon and Goethe at Erfurt (1808). There was also the aged Wieland. But evidently these two intellectuals had yet failed to catch the dawning spirit of the people.

"The Kings of Bavaria, Württemberg, and Westphalia were present with their consorts and attendant courtiers; so, too, were the Prince Primate and the minor rulers of Germany. More memorable still was the appearance on the scene of Germany's most transcendent genius, who came to lay the homage of his intellect at the feet of him whom he considered at the moment, and long after, not only to be the greatest power, but the greatest idealist in the world"—Sloane: *Napoleon Bonaparte*, Vol. III., pp. 171-72.

That there was no realisation of nationalism is evident from the fact that mercenaries could be had on hire. The *condottieri* of Italy and Switzerland sold themselves for lucre.

"One cause above all has raised France to this pinnacle of greatness," wrote Gneisenau. "The Revolution awakened all her powers and gave to every individual a suitable field for his activity. What infinite aptitudes slumber in the bosom of a nation! Why do not the courts take steps to open up a career to it wherever it is found, to encourage talents and virtues, whatever the rank? The Revolution has set the whole strength of a nation in motion, and by the equalisation of classes converted the living strength of men and the dead strength of resources into a productive capital, and thereby upset the old relations of states and the old equilibrium. If other states desire to restore their equilibrium, they must employ the same instruments."

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soldiers were beginning to use strange new words such as Fatherland, and Patriotism, and Freedom."—A. G. Macdonell: *Napoleon and his Marshals*, p. 185.

"The army, 600,000 strong, of Frenchmen, Swiss, Austrians, Prussians, Poles, Illyrians, Rhinelanders, North-Italians, Neapolitans, Saxons, Bavarians, Westphalians, Portuguese, and Spaniards, crossed the Niemen on the 24th of June (1812)."—Macdonell, *ibid.* p. 242.

Cf. "England now descended far below the level even of those petty German princes who, about the same time sold us troops to fight the Americans—the Hussar-mongers of Hesse and Anspach."—Macaulay: *Essay on Warren Hastings*.

It took the European peoples the whole of the nineteenth century for the emergence of the Sovereign National States of Germany, Italy and of the Balkans, and it is only after the devastating war of 1914-18 that Poland and other States have sprung into existence with full consciousness of nationality. Tiny little states like Lithuania, Esthonia, Albania, Latvia had had their self-realisation. Metternich's sneer: "Italy is only a geographical expression" was falsified even during his life-time and when the storm burst forth in 1848, he had to flee in disguise.

India was also a mere geographical expression—though the bonds of culture and religion between the various provinces were strong and indissoluble. Valmiki and Kalidas, Sankara and Ramanuja, receive as much homage from a Bengali as from a Madrasi.

In Bengal at any rate, the Hindu and Moslem are ethnically and linguistically absolutely identical as has been shewn elsewhere. Moreover, throughout India, Islamic culture embracing music, architecture, and the beauties of Persian literature represented by Firdousi, Hafiz and Sadi, makes an impressive appeal to Hindu minds. And even Nanak, Kabir, and Chaitanya have been swayed by the ideal of Brotherhood of Man which is the basis of Islamic religion. The adaptable Hindu mind has always paid homage to Moslem *Pirs* (saints). In fact the cult of *Satyanarain*, also called *Satyapir* with its Sanskrit verses is still a powerful force in an orthodox Hindu home.

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# COMMUNALISM

## CHAPTER XIV.

### COMMUNALISM IN THE 20TH CENTURY DUE TO SINISTER INFLUENCES OF BRITISH IMPERIALISTS FOSTERED IN THE MISTAKEN NOTION THAT IT WILL PERPETUATE BRITISH RULE.

"India is our prize possession. We have to live on it. Our own resources can keep us living for only six months of the year, and it is the task of you, the younger and rising generation, to hold India to the last drop of your blood."—LORD BIRKENHEAD : Address to Oxford Students.

"We did not conquer India for the benefit of the Indians. I know it is said in missionary meetings that we conquered India to raise the level of Indians. That is cant. We conquered India as the outlet for the goods of Great Britain. We conquered India by the sword and by the sword we should hold it. I am not such a hypocrite as to say we hold India for the Indians. We hold it as the finest outlet for British goods in general and for the Lancashire cotton goods in particular."—LORD BRENTFORD.

*Divide et impera* was the motto of Roman imperialism. History repeats itself. The British imperialists, afraid of the slow but silent progress of the peoples of India towards nationalism, wanted to nip it in the bud and devised sundry subtle methods for the purpose. The Hindus due to their own initiative had made rapid strides in western education and in assimilating western ideas. They had naturally secured a predominant position in the political world and had captured the high posts in the administration. Nothing was easier than to foment and work upon the jealousy of the backward section. If the British rulers really wanted the good of India they would have done everything in their power to encourage and spread education among the backward classes and so to raise them to the same level with the Hindus ; but they knew full well that education, national consciousness and mass awaken-

ing go hand in hand. Policy therefore dictated that no efforts should be made to lift the non-progressive elements out of the quagmire of ignorance and illiteracy in which they are wallowing. In fact, as ignorance and illiteracy are the best media and breeding ground for the growth of jealousy and fanaticism, these should be perpetuated and exploited to the full. Of course a handful of highminded Englishmen, true to the noble instincts of the great nation, have now and then uttered a note of protest and warning but their voices have been drowned in the midst of the clamour and hue and cry of the imperialists. "Honest" John Morley as Secretary of State for India, nurtured in the traditions of liberalism, tried to restrain the hands of Lord Minto. But the cry of "the Empire in danger" was too much for him and he had to abdicate and give a *carte blanche* to the "man on the spot."

### I—DIVIDE AND RULE!

In Volume I (p. 138) I have given an outline of the anticipatory measures of the evangel of Imperialism—Lord Curzon—to spite and keep down the Hindus. Let two eminent authorities speak on the subject and bear their independent testimony:

"There was never any cause for quarrel between Hindoos and Mohammedans as such. As simple cultivators they live side by side, and speak the same language. For the first time in history a religious feud was established between them by the partition of the province. For the first time the principle was enunciated in official circles: Divide and Rule! The hope was held out that the Partition would invest the Mohammedans with 'a unity they had not enjoyed since the days of the old Mussulman Viceroy and Kings' ".—Sir Henry Cotton: *Home and Indian Memories*, p. 317.

"Sinister influences have been and are at work on the part of the Government; that Mohammedan leaders have been and are inspired by certain British officials and that these officials have pulled and continue to pull, wires at Simla and in London, and malice aforethought sow discord between the Mohammedan and the Hindu communities by showing to the Mohammedans special favours."—Ramsay MacDonald: *The Awakening of India* (1911), p. 283.

"Division by creeds and classes means the creation of political camps organized against each other, and teaches men to think as partisans and not as citizens; and it is difficult to see how the change from this system to national representation is ever to occur."—Montagu-Chelmsford Report.

The following extracts from a very able article in the *Modern Review* (June, 1933) by Ramesh Chandra Banerjee, will throw further light on the subject :

"It is said that the spectators see more of the game than the players. I will therefore present the reader with an excerpt from an article written by a foreign observer, on the history of the genesis and development of the Government's communal policy as worked out up to the announcement of the communal award recently made by the British Premier; and, it is hoped, the length of the excerpt will repay perusal :

"The history of the matter runs back to 1906. In that year a small deputation led by the Aga Khan, asked Lord Minto, the British Viceroy of India at that time for communal representation for Moslems. From the *Recollections of Lord Morley*, who was then Secretary of State for India, we learn that Lord Minto himself had first suggested this idea to the Moslems, though Morley advised against it.<sup>1</sup> The British Government agreed to the idea and established it by law in the reforms of 1909. The Sikhs were then also granted communal representation. From that time on, the separatist spirit among the Moslems increased."

"At the Second Indian Round Table Conference it was proposed that the communal representation should be applied to other communities such as Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians and the Untouchables. Mahatma Gandhi strenuously objected to any such extensions specially with regard to untouchables.

"The report of the Commission on the Constitution of Ceylon headed by Lord Donoughmore, in 1928, agreed with Mr. Gandhi. It said the communal representation is, as it were, a canker in the body politic, eating deeper and deeper into the vital energies of the people, breeding self-interest, suspicion and animosity, poisoning the new growth of

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<sup>1</sup> The passage referred to by Mr. Gregg is perhaps this :—"I won't follow you again into our Mahomedan dispute. Only I respectfully remind you once more that it was your early speech that started the M. hare. I am convinced my decision was the best."—Vol. II, p. 325. Referring to the communal problem Lord Morley further observed : "If it could be said that this chapter of reforms led directly or indirectly to the establishment of a parliamentary system in India, I for one, would have nothing to do with it."



political consciousness and effectively preventing the development of a national or corporate spirit.

"The Commission also pointed out that once established 'the desire for communal representation tends to grow rather than to die down.' This has been the case among the Moslems and Sikhs in India.

"In regard to separate electorates for the depressed classes, the Simon Report (vol. ii, p. 65) said: 'We are averse from stereotyping the differences between the depressed classes and the remainder of the Hindus by such a step which we consider would introduce a new and serious bar to ultimate political amalgamation with others. If separate electorates have to be maintained for certain classes which have already secured them, there is no reason for bringing other cases within the mode of this treatment, if it can be avoided. A separate electorate for depressed classes means . . . stigmatizing each individual voter in the list and militates against the process . . . of helping those who are depressed to rise in the social and economic scale.'

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"Thus have our British rulers, who are champions of democracy in their own country, tried and almost succeeded in creating a permanent wall between caste and caste, obviously with a view to prevent the growth of the spirit of solidarity among Hindus.

"That famous Englishman, Bertrand Russell, speaks of it, in the *Manchester Guardian* thus :

"The Indian Government's present attitude only confirms the view that I have expressed—that it is impeding social reform. It is meeting the demand for reform with delaying tactics and spurious arguments.' "

The above is however one part of the story. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's *volte face* is one of the most remarkable incidents in the English political history of modern times. They say that from the sublime to the ludicrous is but one step. It would form a chapter in psychology if one were to study the career of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, author of *The Awakening of India* (1911) and his career as the Premier under what is called the 'National Government.' It is an illustration of Philip Sober vs. Philip Drunk. Mr. MacDonald has now turned a rank imperialist and as such does not hesitate to go back upon his past preachings and stoop to low means and ignoble tactics. The enlightened Hindus in spite of the disabilities of a subject race have been slowly forging ahead and hence political saga-

city demands that they should be kept down and their progress arrested.

At the Second Round Table Conference, a prearranged plan had been made to exclude the representation of Nationalist Moslems so that the Moslem group might act as a team to obtain communal electorate; other anti-national devices were also staged. In vain did Mahatma Gandhi plead for the presence of Dr. Ansari (an ex-President of the National Congress). But Dr. Ansari's great crime was that though a Moslem he is a staunch Congressman as well. Hence every care was taken to select as representatives of the great Moslem community the most rabid anti-nationalists. The Congress has always stood as a non-sectarian and non-communal organization. It has never spoken for this community or that, but for the nation as a whole. Not satisfied with packing the Conference with the reactionary group of Moslems they also took particular care to nominate among the Hindus also certain representatives of the so-called depressed classes, who were quite on a par with their Moslem confrères in their anti-national outlook. This is not the place to discuss the nefarious tactics against which Mahatma Gandhi resolutely set his face. But the astounding upshot was that the Premier constituted himself as the arbitrator for India, since the Hindus could not agree among themselves or come to amicable terms with the Moslems.

Mr. MacDonald in due course gave his "award" in which not only the Moslems, but also the Sikhs, the Christians, the so-called depressed classes had their respective electorates, thus perpetuating class-feuds.

About a couple of years ago, the leading daily paper of the United Provinces urgently invited my opinion on the "award". I at once wired to the following effect: "Most retrograde: setting class against class—a serious stumbling block in the path of nationalism." The only hopeful thing is that many able Moslem leaders and almost the entire younger generation of Moslems are dead against communalism.

As if to give the lie direct to the methods of Mr. MacDonald and his colleagues in the Cabinet, notably the Secretary of State for India, Sir Samuel Hoare, the most fervid and uncompromising opponent of communalism is a Moslem, Dr. Mahomed Alam, who has gone to jail as a civil-resister and has ruined his health and career and courted poverty, has made himself the apostle of anti-communalism. Immediately he came out of the stone-walls and iron bars, he began to preach his doctrine and started a Urdu journal at Lahore, *The Tiryag*, [antidote to (communal) poison] to undo the mischief. Says Dr. Alam :

"Communalism and nationalism are contradictory terms. Nationalism is anti-communalism and the essence of the latter was that civic rights were protected not by mutual understandings of a temporary nature but by a common bond of interest irrespective of religion."

Another patriotic Moslem writes :

"In the wide range of world's history, perhaps India is the only exception, where things circumstantial are magnified and things essential are minimised and sidetracked. Otherwise how could it be possible that such paltry things as the distribution of seats and services between different communities would crop up at every moment and mar all prospects of constitutional advancement? . . . . We hear from octogenarian fathers that thirty years ago there was no such thing as the communal problem. . . . The relation between the Hindus and Moslems was always as cordial and natural as does exist between two sons of the same parents."—Rezaul Karim : *A. B. Patrika*, April 22, 1933.

## II—SEPARATE ELECTORATE.

A year later, this thoughtful writer thus exposes the hollowness of the White Paper scheme, which by perpetuating separate electorate also seeks to perpetuate our bondage :

"We distinctly remember how in our school-going days we were inspired and invigorated by the fire-breathing speeches of Mr. Jinnah. In those days the political ideals of the Muslim League were almost identical with those of the Congress so much so that many people began to look upon the Congress and the League as the two sides of the same coin.

"We need not relate here the shameful story of how the Muslim League gradually deviated from its ideals of independence and how, instead of becoming an organisation for the advancement of Indian

political units, it became a clique of reactionary parties bent on stemming the tide of rising nationalism in India. While the Congress began to march forward and forward from the ideal of Home Rule to that of Swaraj, the movement of the Muslim League, like the ghost of the Indian folk-tales was backward. Its ideals, therefore, receded backward and backward till it unknowingly fell into the abyss and quagmire of European diplomacy. And its veteran leaders finding no other means of escape made common cause with the school of Churchills.

"We may say that the White Paper scheme is the natural sequel of the faithless behaviour of the followers of Mr. Jinnah who were so enamoured of some unsubstantial seats that to get them recorded in the Statute Book they did not hesitate to betray the cause of India at the eleventh hour and to make common cause with enemies of Indian nationalism to crush the legitimate aspiration and adult ambition of young India.

"Mr. Jinnah and his followers could not take the nationalist Muslims into their confidence by abandoning one point in the fourteen but the whole world knows how they have yielded to the enemies of India and Islam by surrendering the eternal jewels of their soul and took exultantly whatever was doled out to them. Such is the fate of all unprincipled men in the world. Let them enjoy the fruit of their follies. It is their fanaticism, their half-hearted policy that is mainly responsible for the White Paper scheme. It is too late to think of making any improvement upon it.

"We do not know whether Mr. Jinnah had still realised the folly and mistake of his policy or whether he has been able to recover himself from the fatal hallucination which has possessed him so long. But this we must tell him clearly that if he is sincere in his motive, if he sincerely loves his country and community and if he sincerely desires the liberation of his country he must have to change his policy and ideals which had done untold mischief to the country in the past and are keeping away the Muslims from the inspiring touch of advanced political ideas."—*The Amrita Bazar Patrika*, April 11, 1934.

The "Muslim Contributor" of the *A. B. Patrika* writes :

"The 'popular house' would be a conglomeration of separate electorates, Hindu, Muslim, European, Depressed and other sectional electorates. What earthly chance is there of an organized party to put up an effective opposition to the Governments of the future? The nationalist Muslims have always contended for joint electorates. But they never got a chance to put up their case before the various Round Table Conferences and the Joint Select Committee. Everything was stage-managed and the communalists were depicted as the real representatives of Muslim India. The cause of the nationalist Muslims of

India is on a par with that of the Anti-Separationists of Burma. A plebiscite amongst the Muslims of India would show their strength. But what good is a plebiscite? The Anti-Separationists of Burma won the elections on that particular issue by an overwhelming majority. But even that has not proved convincing. It reminds one of the Indian adage 'If you make up your mind not to be convinced, no one can convince you.' Sir Samuel Hoare has made up his mind not to be convinced."

*Real Representation.*

A young Moslem champions the cause of the Bengal ryots, thus :

"Now, whatever might be the religious differences between the Hindu and Muslim agriculturists, it goes without saying that their economic interests are the same and so are the interests of the zemindars, both Hindu and Muslim. Whenever the interests of the ryots and the zemindars will come in conflict, and they are ever in conflict, the zemindars as a class will fight against the ryots as a class, Hindus or Muslims. The Bengal Tenancy (Amendment) Act stands as a living testimony to this and the proposed second chamber furnishes another good example. Hence we find that there is no way left for the Muslim agriculturists but to join hands with the Hindu agriculturists.

"Leaving religious questions aside which I consider to have nothing to do with economic and political issues, I would like to point out that a Hindu proletariat is as good as any Muslim and a Muslim bourgeoisie is worse than any Hindu proletariat. It is immaterial for me, an agriculturist, whether Muslims secure 30 per cent. or more seats in the legislature, but I am interested to see how many real representatives of the ryots are returned in the Council. Even if I find that 90 p.c. of the seats in the Bengal Council are captured by the Hindus who really represent the ryots of Bengal I shall not grudge the situation but it will pain me to see the zemindars occupying the majority of seats even if they be Muslims. And I know it fully well that in a regime of separate electorate it is not the Muslims who will be in a majority but the zemindars. In this connection I would like to remind my Muslim brethren that the Legislative Council is not a place where religious questions are discussed but it is a house which decides questions affecting economic interests. Would we still advocate representation on communal basis? I hope that I shall not be misunderstood by my co-religionists.

"These are only a few of the problems which the Muslims have to face. I would request every friend of mine to think over them and I am sure that if he possesses even a little sympathy with the 90 p.c. of the

Muslims of Bengal, he will be one with me."—*The Advance*, Nov. 3, 1933.

A young Moslem, who is only an undergraduate, writes :

"We were extremely hopeful when we heard from H. H. The Aga Khan that communalism is nothing short of an anachronism in a democratic country. We thought that after living for a long time in the free and democratic atmosphere of Europe, his outlook had been broadened and he had realised this stern reality.

"The dramatic change of H. H.'s recent attitude does not surprise us because whatever the Aga Khan's Highness may be, neither he nor his Delhi followers think for the interest of the community of which they talk now and then, but what they think of is only how to grind their personal axes at the expense of the community . . . But may we ask the Muslim community how long they will allow themselves to be exploited by these so-called leaders? Would they realise that their interest lies in the growth and development of virile national consciousness and not in rank communalism?"—Abdoos Satter: *The Advance*, March 1, 1934.

There are always at the beck and call of the imperialists men to do the dirty job. The following account of the Aga Khan from the pen of an English writer will prove arresting (*Grey Wolf* by Armstrong, pp. 246-7).

"Mustafa Kemal saw the danger. In the hostile city of Constantinople, where the population hated him, round the Caliph, and led by his most capable opponents, was forming a monarchical and religious movement against him.

"The people looked up to the Caliph as their religious head.

"As he [M. Kemal] waited wondering how to act, once more Chance came to help him, once more England supplied him with a weapon. The Agha Khan and the aged and revered Amir Ali, two Indian Moslems, decided to write a letter of protest on behalf of the Moslems of India, demanding that the dignity of Caliph be respected. This letter was sent to the Constantinople press and published before it reached the Government in Angora.

"It was Mustafa Kemal's opportunity. He unearthed the history of the Agha Khan ; he was a Moslem of some importance in India, the leader of the heretical sect of the Ishmaeli ; he lived in England, kept English racehorses, wore English clothes,

and hobnobbed with English politicians and ambassadors ; during the world war the English had increased his prestige by careful propaganda, until he was looked on as the head of the Indian Moslems ; they had used him as a counterpoise to the Sultan and Turkish propaganda in the East.

“ ‘He is,’ said Mustafa Kemal, ‘a special agent of the English.’ To work up the agitation was easy. England, the crafty, subtle enemy who had failed to destroy Turkey with the Greeks, was at her intrigues again, using the Indian Moslems and the Agha Khan to back Caliph and split the Turks into two camps.”

The following extract from the Presidential address by Mr. Abdul Karim, late Inspector of Schools, delivered on the 26th November, 1933, at the Bengal Presidency Muslim League Annual Session, will also conclusively prove that thoughtful Moslem leaders have not hesitated to speak out :

“It is extremely to be regretted that at this critical juncture in the history of modern India, when the need for unity and solidarity cannot be over-stressed, there should be so much bickering among some of the prominent members of this unfortunate community. While other communities have been actively organising themselves and vigorously mobilising all their forces for the fight ahead, Muslim energy and resources are being frittered away in unseemly wranglings for leadership, by setting up organisations of doubtful utility. Need I say this is tantamount to committing political suicide ?

“The first item in any programme of economic and political reconstruction of India must, therefore, be the unity among the communities inhabiting it. Failure to create inter-communal harmony and good-will means the perpetuation of her bondage by stultifying all schemes of reform and progress. In fact inter-communal warfare at this critical juncture is another name for national suicide. Nothing is more essential for the political and economic regeneration of the country than the solidarity of its people.

“I disagree with those who hold that in Bengal, for the present the only course is to run the administration on communal lines, and there can be no alternative to a communal government. In the existing circumstances, such a government, I am afraid, will break down sooner or later, and after much suffering, when good sense will prevail a non-communal government will have to be established. By this I do not mean to indicate that either community has not the capacity to carry on

the administration efficiently. Hindus have ruled over Muslims and Muslims have ruled over Hindus without any extraordinary perturbation, not to speak of the ruled being 'crushed out of existence'. Even now the Prime Minister of the largest Muslim State in India, Raja Kishan Parshad, is a Hindu, and Sir Mirza Ismail is the Dewan of the largest Hindu State. They are quite efficiently administering their respective States. Just now another eminent Muslim, Sir Muhammad Habibullah, has been appointed Dewan of the important state of Travancore. But circumstanced as Bengal is at present, only a government in which different communities will have their legitimate share, is likely to be successful.

"It may be pertinently asked in this connection who form the great communities in Bengal—the microscopic classes or the overwhelmingly large masses? The answer to this query, I have no doubt, will be 'the masses'. If this answer is correct, then the inevitable conclusion is that it is the interests of the masses, and not those of the classes, that constitute the interests of the country and the communities.

"Who are responsible for the unseemly communal squabbles? Certainly not the uneducated illiterate masses. My official duties carried me to many of the villages in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, where I found Hindus and Muslims, whose economic and other interests are, in most cases, identical, living most peacefully on the best of terms, never quarrelling for any doubtful right or imaginary grievance. It matters little to them if one community gets a seat more or a seat less in the council or a post more or a post less in service. *My belief is that it is people who call themselves educated that have set the communal squabble agoing, in many instances for their own ends.* (The italics are mine).

"I should not omit to sound a note of warning to the self-appointed and Government-made leaders of the community, and to others concerned, that young Muslim Bengal, now wide awake to their true interests, are not likely to allow the bartering away of their birth-right without a challenge."

The future historian will record with shame and indignation that while the educated and cultured Indians—Hindus and Moslems—were trying their level best to bring harmony among the two communities, it was reserved for the Prime Minister of England to sow the dragon's teeth and thus perpetuate the chasm not only between the different castes and sects of the Hindus but also between the two great divisions of the people. The drowning man catches at the last straw. Accord-



ing to the school of politicians of whom Mr. MacDonald has made himself the spokesman, the one thing needful for preventing the Indian Empire slipping out of the hands of England is to set class against class and hold a premium on communalism. It never occurs to them that the better method would be to make the Indians feel that they are really British citizens by granting them genuine Dominion Status, which Mr. MacDonald himself suggested would have to be done just after he formed the first Labour Ministry.<sup>2</sup> Politicians have however short and convenient memories. They throw away their life-long cherished principles with as little concern as one would cast off a pair of old shoes or a worn out garment.

Mr. MacDonald on behalf of the reactionaries has not only tried to widen the breach between the Hindus and Moslems, but he has also developed a sudden solicitude for the depressed classes and has adopted as his slogan : "Remember Codlin is the friend and not Short." By offering the bait of a few more seats in the Council Chamber through separate electorate he seeks to perpetuate in India a class of social lepers. That this is only a logical development of the policy systematically pursued by British Imperialists will be clear from the following extracts from the Punjab Census Report of Mr. Middleton (1921) :

"Government's passion for labels and pigeon-holes had led to a crystallization of the caste system which, except among the aristocratic castes, was really very fluid under indigenous rule. If the Government would ignore caste, it would gradually be replaced by something very different among the lower castes.

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"The activities of the British Government have gone very little towards the solution of the problem of caste. Most of these activities, as must be evident, were dictated by prudence of administration and not by a desire to reduce the rigidity of caste whose disadvantages were so patent to them.

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<sup>2</sup> The present Prime Minister on July 2, 1928, used these words :

"I hope that within a period of months rather than years there will be a new Dominion added to the Commonwealth of our nations, a Dominion of another race, a Dominion that will find self-respect as an equal within this Commonwealth; I refer to India."

"On the whole the British rulers of India, who have throughout professed to be the trustees of the welfare of the country, never seem to have given much thought to the problem of caste, in so far as it affects the nationhood of India. Nor have they shown willingness to take a bold step rendering caste innocuous. Their measures generally have been promulgated piecemeal and with due regard to the safety of the British domination."

The lesson of the Mutiny, *viz.*, that the safety of the British domination in India was very closely connected with keeping the Indian people divided on the lines of castes, was driven home to the British rulers. Some officials like Sir Lepel Griffin thought that caste was useful in preventing rebellion, while James Ker, Principal of the Hindu College, Calcutta, wrote the following in 1865 :

"It may be doubted if the existence of caste is on the whole unfavourable to the permanence of our rule. It may even be considered favourable to it, provided we act with prudence and forbearance. Its spirit is opposed to national union."

### III—SEPARATE ELECTORATE FOR DEPRESSED CLASSES.

But the climax seems to have been reached in the separate electorate for the depressed classes provided in the proposed constitution.

Since the days of Rammohun Roy social reform movement has been a prominent feature in the programme of the Brahmo Samaj, the Arya Samaj, the Ramkrishna Mission inaugurated by Vivekananda and other bodies. The advanced section of the Hindus has thus been prominent in activities in this direction. When Mahatma Gandhi in 1921 started the new political programme, he assigned to the removal of untouchability the foremost importance. In connection with the sittings of the National Congress, a social conference has almost invariably been held, having for its object the levelling down of caste rigidities, female education, spread of primary education and the like. In 1917 I was elected President of the Conference. I chose for my address the *Problem of the Depressed Classes* from which one or two excerpts are quoted below :

"Is it fair, is it just, is it in the best interests of our country that a handful of privileged men should continue to monopolise all the

advantages accruing to them through the accident of birth and drive the submerged teeming millions to hostile camps and compel them to live in a state of armed neutrality? A house divided against itself cannot stand. The backward classes are flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone and it is the bounden duty of our men of light and leading to extend to them the right hand of fellowship and lift them up from the quagmire of degradation and despondency. . . . The loss to the country from the intellectual stagnation of the overwhelming majority of her people is simply incalculable.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Within the last three centuries, and from time to time there have arisen also in our midst saints and prophets like Guru Nanak and Kabir and Chaitanya to preach the Doctrine of Brotherhood of Man, and had it not been for their teachings a far larger proportion of the people of North India would have embraced Islam."

It now suits the convenience of Mr. MacDonald to pose as a champion of the caste-system, though the Hindus themselves are astir to set their house in order.

A few years ago the late Lajpat Rai proposed in the Assembly that a sum of one crore of rupees be set apart annually expressly for the education of the "depressed" classes. Our *paternal* government however poured cold water over the scheme, thus evincing its solicitude for the masses.

It is very unfortunate that the communal award should have come to us as an apple of discord and have diverted the attention of many who are engaged in the difficult and uphill task of nation-building to trivial things. Mahatma Gandhi, however, with the sagacity of a true leader, has concentrated his super-human abilities to the unification of Hindu India. The Harijan Movement has stirred the depths of Hindu society, and bids fair to bring about a revolution in the Indian body politic. The doctrine of equality and dignity of man as man preached by the saints of India in the middle ages, have, under the inspiration of the Mahatma, acquired a new political significance, and is rapidly developing a consciousness among the masses of India which no power in the world can any longer suppress.

The eminent leader of the Moslem community in Madras, Mr. Yakub Hasan in a recent address entitled "Nationalism :

The Super-religion of India" puts forth admirable sentiments and I can do no better than conclude this chapter with a few extracts from his address.

"The reason why nationalism has worked such wonders in the transformation of Turkey is that the Turks elevated it to a position in their heart that was in olden days generally given by oriental peoples to religion. With Turks nationalism became as great a motive power as religion has been with some people in the past.

"I am not prepared to give up my religion and I do not ask you to give up yours. All that I ask you to do is to regard nationalism as a thing above religion and give it such a position in your heart that no religious sentiment will interfere with it. Religion is after all our personal relationship with God.

"Now that we are confronted with a constitutional crisis which is by no means less grave than the crisis that Turks were faced with in 1923, it is very important that we should as Indian Nationalists stand together and forget that in respect of religion we are Hindus or Muslims, Christians or Parsees, Sikhs or Jains.

"It is, therefore, high time that there should be a purely political party in India which should make it its sole object to create, develop and strengthen the national feeling in the country. It was for such a high purpose that the Nation First Party was brought into existence."

#### IV—NATIONALIST MUSLIMS ON SEPARATE AND JOINT ELECTORATES.

While preparing this chapter for the press, I came across in the *Modern Review* (July, 1934) the opinions of some Moslem leaders of all-India reputation declaiming against separate electorate as the very negation of nationalism :

"Though at present Muslims claiming to be Nationalists are praising the Congress Working Committee's non-acceptance and non-rejection of the Communal Decision, of which separate electorates are an essential feature, it was not long ago that their most prominent leaders condemned separate electorates

and praised and asked for joint electorates. Brief extracts from their opinions are reproduced below from the Allahabad Law Journal Press pamphlet on the Communal Decision.

"We shall first give the opinion of the late Sir Ali Imam. Presiding at the All-India Muslim Nationalist Conference at Lucknow on the 18th April 1931, he said :

'To-day's Conference represented Muslim Nationalists, in other words, people who were not wedded to a scheme of separation. They had been simply flooded with messages from every corner of India from different leaders who one and all insisted on the basic principle of joint electorates.'

'Separate electorates connote the negation of nationalism. Political problems are but a reflex of social forces. If you erect an iron wall between community and community in their politics, you destroy the social fabric, and day to day life will become insupportable if you insist on building political barriers. Nationalism can never evolve from division and dissensions.'

"At this Lucknow Conference Dr. Ansari moved the principal resolution the last paragraph of which stated that the Nationalist Muslim Party strongly holds the principle of joint electorates. In moving the resolution Dr. Ansari said, in part :

'This is not the occasion to expatiate on the absolute necessity of joint electorates for the growth of a united nationhood. I am speaking to Mussalmans just now, and I wish to tell the Muslim community through you that, apart from wider national considerations, the insistence on separate electorates would prove suicidal to the continuance of the Mussalmans in this country as a political and cultural force of any significance.'

"Presiding at the All-Bengal Muslim Nationalist Conference at Faridpur on June 27, 1931, Dr. Ansari repeated his previous views.

"The principal resolution passed at this Conference insisted on 'joint electorate with adult suffrage.' In supporting this resolution Mr. T. A. K. Sherwani said :

'The advocates of separation wanted to erect insurmountable barriers between Muslims and other communities. To this the nationalists could never consent. The evil effect of separate electorates was apparent from the fact that the spirit of separatism was penetrating among the Muslims themselves. Votes were being canvassed on the basis of a

## MOSLEM LEADERS ON SEPARATE ELECTORATE 281

candidate being a Mirza or a Pathan, Qureshi or Ansari, Shiah or Sunni.'

"Dr. Ansari, in the course of a speech at the United Provinces Nationalist Conference at Meerut on the 28th July, 1931, stated that joint electorates were the second basic principle of the scheme he stressed.

"Dr. Mahmud in his presidential address at the same Meerut Conference stated :

'The programme of separate representation has killed the spirit of competition. It has arrested the natural and healthy growth of public spirit among the Mussalmans. Common electorates, on the other hand, will draw out the best and the noblest that is in the Muslim society.'

"Malik Barkat Ali, Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Punjab Nationalist Muslim Conference held at Lahore on the 24th October, 1931, said with reference to the question of separate electorates :

'We feel that in the circumstances of to-day and in the India of the future, they should have no place whatever.'

"The Bengal Council devoted the whole of August 2, 1932, to discussing Mr. Abdus Samad's resolution in favour of joint electorates and ultimately adopted by 47 votes to 32 Mr. Tamizuddin Khan's amendment :

'That the Government be pleased to inform the proper authorities concerned that in the opinion of this Council the system of separate electorates in the future constitution of the country should be replaced by a system of joint electorates.'

"Mr. Asaf Ali concluded a long statement issued to the Press on June 14, 1932, from New Delhi thus :

The simplest formula they (the Muslims) should stick to is 'joint electorates, no reservation, no weightage, no special constituencies and adult suffrage, or the lowest qualification for franchise to enable the bulk of the population to get representation, and if any formula for minorities is insisted upon by minorities in different provinces, it should be uniform for all minorities.' Any deviation from it would complicate both present and future issues, and would work to the detriment of both the country and even the Muslim community.

"The principal resolution at a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Bengal Nationalist Muslim party held in August,

1932, under the presidentship of Chaudhury Mozzem Hossain recorded

'Its emphatic protest against the communal award recently given by the Prime Minister in consultation with the British Cabinet on the following among other grounds: It recognizes the principle of separate electorates, which is fundamentally opposed to responsible government.'

"Maulana Abul Kalam Azad said in the course of an interview to the *Free Press* in Calcutta on September 1, 1932:

'The Communal Award of the Prime Minister is the most dangerous thing that could happen to Indian Nationalism. It has set one community against the other, without giving any tangible benefit to any save the Europeans.'

"Dr. M. A. Ansari, President of the Nationalist Moslems, said in a recent interview, published in the *Hindusthan Times* of the 13th March, 1934:

'The communal award is the result of the deliberate choice of a particular kind of Round Table Conference personnel to render a settlement impossible and thus impose an outside solution.'

#### V—DEATH-KNELL OF NATIONALISM.

At the recent Congress Nationalist Conference, August, 1934, Mr. Abdus Samad in seconding the resolution against Mr. MacDonald's "award" said that:

"The decision of the Congress Working Committee had sounded the death-knell of nationalism in India, and its effect would deter the possibility of an amicable settlement between the two communities. He opposed the Communal Award because it was anti-national and inconsistent with any responsible form of government.

"Responsible government with separate electorate could not go hand in hand. Muslims had enjoyed the privileges of separate electorates. But what was the sum-total of their gain? Nothing. The tension of having more was daily gaining ground. The only effective and best safeguard for a backward community was not separate electorate but the support and co-operation of the advanced community. *The Communal Award would usher in an era of fratricidal strife in the country. He opposed separate electorates because it would more seriously affect the interests of the Muslim community than those of the Hindu community. The continuance of the separate electorates would merely strengthen the hands of the bureaucracy.*" (Italics are mine).

Mr. Samad's note of warning has found an echo in Mr. Abdus Sattar's and Mr. Rezaul Karim's letters in the *Ananda Bazar Patrika* (Bengal) and in Professor Abdul Majid Bukhsh's in the *Tribune* (Punjab). The writers strongly support a common electorate as the basis of all negotiations.

The Moslem contributor of the *A. B. Patrika* (September 2, 1934) very ably summarises the mischief done by the "award":

"The crux of the whole problem is in having joint electorates. The British Premier, naturally would like to perpetuate the system of separate electorates for all times to come. He would not be human if he did not do so. One of the most harmful results of the system of separate electorates has been the accentuating of one's own religious orthodoxism. When fanaticism and orthodoxism were on the point of decay they were given a fillip by the introduction of the system of separate electorates. What untold harm it has done will only be apparent fifty years from now. It has harmed Hinduism, it has harmed Islam. The growth and development of liberal tendencies amongst all religious faiths, which was a 20th century phenomenon, has been retarded. Humanity has been stunted by means of this vicious system of electorates."

The fact is the interests of the Hindu and the Moslem are identical. If we can win real Swaraj, the top-heavy administration will go down and the crores of rupees which fill the pockets of the bureaucrats will be released for compulsory primary education, sanitation and agricultural improvements. In Bengal, at any rate, Moslems will be thereby more benefited than the Hindus.

#### VI—"QUO VADIS" MUSLIMS?

I cannot conclude this chapter better than with the racy and patriotic utterance of a thoughtful Muslim, Mr. A. Quaiyum Ansari:

"Perhaps the utter bankruptcy of the present Muslim leadership in India was never so pronounced and self-exposed as it is to-day. It has beyond doubt proved its sheer worthlessness. Its glaring incapability to discharge its onerous responsibility is before all eyes.

"Visionless, selfish to the core, totally blind to the real needs and interests of their distressed community, the Muslim leaders stand pathetically self-exposed and self-condemned. They live not for the



good and gain of the community; they exist simply for the advantage and benefit of their vicious self.

"A complete degeneration has overtaken the Muslim masses in every wake of life. No better testimony can be produced of the singular ineffectiveness of the vile 'means' adopted by our leaders for the uplift of the community. The egregious failure of their insensate 'policy' admits of no doubt. And no prophet is required to tell that if this state of things continues a little longer Muslims are doomed for ever.

"The truth is, our leaders have long been accustomed to play hide-and-seek with the community. They have always sported with the interests of their unwary people; none can prophesy they will not resort again to their familiar game. We know, they cannot part with it; it pays them to take recourse to such mean tactics. It has brought them immense honour and position in the past; they know it has not lost its 'efficacy' to bring them distinction and power even now.

"It comes very easy to suggest and proclaim that as some executive councillors, ministers and even governors of provinces have been drawn from among the Muslims, the community is making much headway! We wish this claim was true. But, as even a fool knows, one swallow does not make a summer. And if a few 'selected' self-seekers are chosen from time to time (for reasons not very well to state) to occupy these 'glided' offices, the hard reality that a lamentably vast number of Muslims remains to this day not only unfamiliar with the alphabets but also devoid of food and cloth cannot, however, be altered to the slightest degree.

"While unfortunate masses smart under the cruel lash of poverty and starvation and die as poor and hungry as they were born, our leaders shamelessly and brazen-facedly enjoy the 'refreshing' pleasure such honours and offices usually carry in their trail. They add ever new feathers to their caps, while the famished and the destitute live their own miserable life!

"And, yet a pernicious figure gleefully points to that magnificent 'achievement' of our leaders boastfully claimed in their detestable coterie as the Magna Charta of Muslims! We all may well feel jubilant and dance in joy now that the portals of Heaven to which only our leaders had access heretofore has now been thrown open to us!

"At the behests of our leaders our time has ever been taken up and our energy ever been caused to be wasted in sheer drudgery of meaningless and often harmful pursuits. Our resources have always been directed towards the stagnant pool of our leaders' personal advantage from where the larger and moving stream of real interest of the community has been entirely cut-off. Who knows we are not being led into the spiders parlour once more!

"The leaders may have secured a Magna Charta or even a Chapter of Heavenly Bliss in the shape of the loudly-acclaimed Communal Award. We do not want to deny them the happiness and contentment of having obtained such a precious 'prize'. Nor is it our desire for a moment to deprive them of the joy of relishing to their hearts' content the 'juicy' fruit of their 'own' untiring labour. We simply like to point out that this much-trumpeted boon does not in any way improve the wretched, unhappy plight of Muslim masses who continue to languish in a practically neglected and uncared and unlooked for state as ever.

"Our leaders have off and on made us believe that the community's interests are bound up with offices, seats and services alone. As if a few more seats in the legislatures and a few more jobs for which Muslims cannot qualify in open competition will bring the promised millennium to the Muslim community!

"However much these leaders may prate and boast of their grand performances and splendid achievements at the Round Table Conferences and in the cabinets, the facts remain as bare, simple facts. No conceivable or inconceivable amount of wordy jugglery on their part can change the horrifying and heart-rending aspect of those remote, isolated villages where Muslim masses dwell in extremely insanitary and unhealthy surroundings, miserably rotting in the darkness of humiliating ignorance and groaning under the agonizing iron-heels of grinding poverty all throughout the three hundred and sixty-five days of a year!

"Our leaders, completely engrossed as they are in self-interest, ignore all realities and, in their purblindness, count the progress of the community in terms merely of seats and services. They have never troubled their minds to give a serious consideration to the vital and life-and-death problem of raising the present degrading status of the Muslim masses. These good persons are simply incapable of visualizing the certainties of the situation and of looking beyond their own self.

"Not one of our leaders has ever thought, or likes to think, of the very momentous question of helping the Muslim masses out of the pitch gloom of illiteracy and ignorance and of devising means of giving these famished, poor creatures of God enough food to appease their excruciating hunger and enough cloth to hide their abasing nakedness.

"This is a very sorry picture of our leaders of to-day; but there it is in its ugly reality. Will the Muslims tolerate them a day longer?

"We exclaim in despair: Save us from such leaders!"—A. B. Patrika, Nov. 29, 1934.

I have shown above that some of the cultured Moslems themselves feel bitterly the spread of communalism which in the words of one of them is the "very negation of nationalism";

in fact, I have quoted verbatim from their speeches and writings to establish this point. Pressure on space forbids my giving more citations. It is enough to enumerate here the bare names of a number of Moslems of all-India fame—staunch nationalists—who have thrown in their lot with the Hindus in their struggle for winning *Swaraj* and have cheerfully courted jail. Prominent among these are Dr. Ansari (Congress Ex-President), Dr. Syed Mahmud, Dr. Kitchlew, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, Syed Abdul Brelvi (Editor, *Bombay Chronicle*), Yakub Hasan (Madras), Abul Kalam Azad (great Arabic Scholar, knowing only a smattering of English). The Bengali Moslem poet Nazrul Islam, whose name is one to conjure with and who has repeatedly courted incarceration on account of his fiery, soul-stirring verses, deserves special mention in this connection. The rising poet Jasimuddin is also an asset to the younger generation. In short, it would be a gross calumny on the awakened national consciousness of our Moslem brethren to assert that they stand aloof in this hour of upheaval.

That noble son of Bengal, who has consistently and persistently maintained his position, once more criticised the observations of his communally minded co-religionists at the Bengal Council (Dec., 1934).

"Maulavi Abdus Samad criticised the observations made by Khan Bahadur Abdul Momin that the proposed constitution was 'a great advance' on the existing condition of things and that in spite of certain drawbacks and shortcomings, 'the Bengal Muslims to a man' had the general approval of the recommendations of the Select Committee. The speaker recalled what other Muslim leaders, more competent to speak on the subject had said about the report. Sir Abdur Rahim, Mr. Jinnah and many other Muslim leaders had condemned the report in unequivocal terms and had expressed their willingness to join hands with the Congress for rejecting it. Quoting the opinion of some of the moderate Muslim leaders and comparing them with the opinion expressed by Khan Bahadur Momin the speaker asked the House to judge for itself how far his claim to speak as the *de facto* and *de jure* leader of the Muslim community was supported by the opinions expressed by other Muslim leaders.

"The next important point in the Khan Bahadur's speech which required consideration was his remark that 'it is good government

and not self-government that we need.' That was exactly the argument used by Mr. Churchill against the introduction of responsible government in India. Mr. Churchill's contention was not accepted by other British politicians who held that good government was not equivalent to self-government. It was a pity that the Khan Bahadur was trying to outchurchill Mr. Churchill. Nothing better is to be expected from an ex-commissioner of a division. In fact he spoke in the voice of the bureaucracy and not in the voice of the Khan Bahadur, the accredited leader of the Muslim community.

"Another point in the Khan Bahadur's speech which the speaker dealt with was his views about the communal award. The Khan Bahadur hailed the award as the *Magna Charta* of the Muslim community, but in the opinion of the speaker it was a death-blow to Muslim interests and Muslim progress. It was on this ground and not on the ground that it affected the interests of the Hindu community that he had consistently raised his voice of protest against the pernicious system of separate electorate. It was a device very ingenuously planned to keep the Muslim community permanently segregated from their politically, educationally and economically more advanced neighbours, the Hindus, with a view to prevent the growth of patriotism and nationalism among the Muslims, ideals which a community must keep before its mind if it ever aspired to attain political freedom.

"The speaker said that it was not yet too late for the Government to revise their policy and to concede to the Muslims of Bengal absolute majority on the basis of joint electorate by reducing the number of seats allotted to the European community, a position which the speaker knew, the Hindus would gladly accept. Unless that was done, the proposed reforms would bring no peace in the land and the constitution would not be worth the paper on which it was written."

Prof. Abdul Majid Khan of Lahore has also, in unmistakable terms, denounced the communal award (Jan., 1935).

#### VII—MUSLIM LEAGUE—"A GIGANTIC FRAUD."

"It was, we believe, at a Students' Union at Aligarh that a resolution was passed by the Moslem students who are the representatives of the rising generation of the Mahomedans that in view of their past indifference to the cause of the country's political freedom the Moslems have no right to live in India. A more bitter condemnation of the anti-national attitude of the vast majority of those who pose as Moslem leaders is hardly conceivable. By passing the resolution which expressed their acutest sense of dissatisfaction at the politics of these people, the youths of Aligarh demonstrated that the future of the country was not

certainly as dark as the policy and practice of the communalist Moslem public men would lead one to believe.

"The short report of the political discussion held at the Arabic College Hall, Delhi, on last Sunday evening which has been just received is another ray in the prevailing darkness. Opening the discussion one Mr. Shanim Ahmed observed that the future of the Mussalman of India was bound up with that of other sister communities who ought to be regarded by the Mahomedans as the flesh of their flesh and bone of their bones. Another speaker, Mr. Qudrruddin remarked that the Moslems had done very little for the country during the last decade and that what they needed most at the moment was the re-orientation of their thoughts. A third Mahomedan speaker Prof. Zaidi is reported to have expressed the opinion that though the Communal Award was regarded by many elderly Mahomedans as the best thing possible under the sun, 'not one amongst the Moslem youths liked it.' A fourth Mahomedan gentleman who took part in the debate was yet more courageously outspoken in his remarks. He declared that there was not a single representative Moslem organisation of influence and importance which really voiced the real opinions and sentiments of the Mahomedans. In fact, the All-India Muslim Conference was, in his opinion, 'a big hoax' while the Muslim League was 'a gigantic fraud.'"—*A. B. Patrika*, Feb. 21/35.

Strange as it may appear Mr. Jinnah was present at the meeting and had to swallow the compliments paid to the "leaders".

While going through the final proof of this chapter, I read in the daily papers, (Feb. 27, 1935) an account of the admirable address delivered by Madame Halide Edib Adnan to the Calcutta University students, in the course of which she said : "Love of the country came first and therefore India must come first, and not the community. . . . I ask you to love India above everything else."

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## CHAPTER XV.

### COMMUNALISM PRACTICALLY UNKNOWN BEFORE THE DAWN OF THE 'TWENTIETH CENTURY—AN HISTORICAL RETROSPECT— RELIGIOUS TOLERATION.

"Religion had no connexion with civil government, but was only the business, or rather amusement, of private life<sup>1</sup>.—Maxim of Alauddin Khilji, Sultan of Delhi, 1295—1314 A.D."—ELPHINSTONE.

"Sher Shah's (1542-45) aim was to create a secular spirit in the State and keep religion in the background, which he considered as the private concern of the individual, having nothing to do with public life."—K. QUANUNGO : *Sher Shah*.

"When Nadir Shah appeared on the scene (1739) the Peshwa Baji Rao suspended all plans of aggrandisement :

'Our domestic quarrels (he writes) are now insignificant ; there is but one enemy in Hindostan . . . Hindus and Mussulmans, the whole power of the Deccan, must assemble.'"—GRANT DUFF : *History of the Marhattas*.

Let me now make an excursion into the past history of India, i.e. from the 14th century, when the Moslem power was fairly established not only in Northern India but in the Deccan as well, to the dawn of the 20th century. It will be seen that communalism was practically unknown during all those long six centuries. Strange as it may appear it is only of recent manufacture and fomented to subserve political ends. Some passages from Elphinstone's *History of India* (edited by Cowell, 1889) are reproduced here :

"The Hindús were regarded with some contempt, but with no hostility. They were liable to a capitation tax (jizya) and some other invidious distinction, but were not molested in the

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<sup>1</sup> This maxim can only be paralleled with that of Lenin, namely, *religion is the opiate of the people*. But Alauddin lived towards the end of the 13th century and Lenin in the beginning of the 20th—an interval of six centuries. Kemal Pasha also holds that "religion was for him the cold, clogging lava that held down below its crust the flaming soul of the nation."—*Grey Wolf* by Armstrong, p. 241.

exercise of their religion. The Hindús who are mentioned as military commanders may perhaps have been zemíndárs, heading their contingents, and not officers appointed by the crown. There is no doubt, however, that many were employed in civil offices, especially of revenue and accounts ;.....under Mobarik Khiljí (A.D. 1317—21) the whole spirit of the court and administration was Hindú.

#### I—SUR DYNASTY: A.D. 1542—1554.

“Hindus were allowed to hold positions of some importance in his army. This policy he followed from the very beginning of his career.....One of Sher Shah’s best generals was Brahmajit Gaur.....He was sent in pursuit of Humayun after each of the battles of Chaunsa and Bilgram.....We know that as early as the days of Mahmud of Ghazni the Hindus were welcome to the ranks of the Muslim army.

“Sher Shah was the first who attempted to found an Indian Empire broadly based upon the people’s will. ‘No Government, not even the British, has shown so much wisdom as this Pathan’s,’ says Keene.

“Mohammed A’díl Shah (A.D. 1553) committed the conduct of his government to one Hémú, a Hindú, who had once kept a small shop, and whose appearance is said to have been meaner than his origin. Yet, with all these external disadvantages, Hémú had abilities and force of mind sufficient to maintain his ascendancy amidst a proud and martial nobility, and to prevent the dissolution of the government, weighed down as it was by the follies and inequities of its head.”

Even under Emperor Aurangzib (1659—1707), Hindus held very trusted positions in the state. Under Aurangzib’s Viceroy in Bengal, Murshid Kuli Khan, the Hindus had a monopoly of all the important administrative posts in the civil department ; they also held important military posts. Had the Mogul emperor any innate hatred of the Hindus he would have discouraged, nay, sharply reprimanded his Satrap. Even at Delhi the practical head of the revenue department was a Hindu.

"All the same when Jafar Khan was created Prime Minister, and he continued as such during the War of Succession, the actual administration of the revenue department was conducted by the old and experienced Assistant Diwan, Raghnath Khatri, entitled the Rai-i-raian. On gaining the throne Aurangzib continued this temporary arrangement of the diwani, and raised Raghnath to the peerage as Rajah (15 June, 1658). .....He was a man of sterling integrity, diligent attention to business and signal capacity for administration"—J. N. Sarkar: *Aurangzib*, III, p. 72.

It is generally said that Aurangzib alienated his Hindu subjects by his bigotry and illiberal sentiments. But even under his reign "it does not appear that a single Hindu suffered death, imprisonment, or tax on property for his religion or, indeed, that any individual was ever questioned for the open exercise of the worship of his father."—Elphinstone: *History of India*.

He, however, betrays no disinclination to utilise the services of the Rajput chiefs, Jeswant Rao and latterly Jai Singh, when he has to fight against the resourceful Marhatta leader Sivaji representing the Hindu cause. It is true the Mogul Emperor now and then sends Dilir Khan as a counterpoise, but that is because of his suspicious nature. He was more distrustful of his sons (Princes Moazzim, Akbar and others) than of the Hindu general. The perpetual dread lest his sons might emulate his own example haunted him. It is wellknown that after the death of Aurangzib, the Mogul Empire rapidly broke into pieces, and we find that the Hindus rapidly gained the upper hand in the administration of the country, either as independent chiefs, or as military commanders under Mohammadan Princes.

As an example of Hindu toleration I may allude to the history of the Parsis who are the descendants of the ancient Persians who emigrated to India on the conquest of their country by the Arabs in the 8th century. They first landed at Sanjan on the coast of Gujrat, where the Hindu rulers received them hospitably.



Another amongst the numerous instances of Hindu chivalry is given below.

Aurangzib's son, Muhammad Akbar, rebelled against his father and attempted to seize the Crown with the help of the Rajputs. The attempt signally failed ; but the Rajput leader Durgadas most chivalrously escorted the unhappy prince through every danger to the Court of the Marhatta King Shambhuji. Aurangzib was anxious for the restoration of his grandson and grand-daughter and came to terms with Durgadas. I quote below the graphic account of their restoration.

"Akbar's infant son Buland Akhtar and daughter Safiyat-un-nissa had been left in Marwar with his Rathor allies, as the children were too tender to bear the hardships of his flight from the country in 1681. Durgadas placed them in charge of Girdhar Joshi in an obscure place difficult of access. They were brought up [1681—96] with every care not only for their health and morals, but also for their education in the Islamic religion."—J. N. Sarkar : *Aurangzib*, V. pp. 281-2.

## II—BENGAL UNDER THE NAWABS.

Coming nearer home, we notice a complete absence of communalism in Bengal. The independent Pathan Sultans of Bengal were the great patrons of the Bengali language, and Vidyapati sang the glories of one of them in his immortal verse (see p. 89).

The heading of this chapter is the title of a work by Kali Prasanna Banerji. The writer weighs every word and is a reliable authority. Below is given a synopsis of his mature conclusions. In Bengal the zemindars were more or less like the feudal lords of the middle ages in Europe. The *bāra bhunyas* or the twelve semi-independent barons were left severely alone on the payment of a fixed revenue to the Imperial coffer and even this was withheld when the Mogul or the Pathan rule was relaxed at the headquarters. There was no interference in the administration of their internal affairs.

Most of the legal disputes were settled by the awards of arbitrators chosen with the consent of the parties. . . . . Petty cases were submitted to the *punchayets* or village arbitrators whose decisions were final.

Most of these *bāru bhunyas* were Hindus, and the reason for this preference can be gathered from the following extracts from *The Life of Robert, Lord Clive*, Ed. 1836, Vol. I. by Major-General Sir John Malcolm.

“But while they [the Mahommedan rulers] succeeded to the power which these [Hindu] potentates had held, the management of the finance and revenue, and all those minuter arrangements of internal policy, on which the good order of the machine of government must ever depend, remained very nearly in the same hands in which the Mahommedans had found them. . . . . A Hindu, under the denomination of minister, or as Naib (or deputy), continued at the head of the exchequer ; and in this office he was connected with the richest bankers and monied Hindus of the country.

“A very quick and intelligent Mahommedan prince, on being asked why he gave so decided a preference to Hindu managers and renters over those of his own religion, replied that ‘a Mahomedan was like a sieve,—much of what was poured in went through ; while a Hindu was like a sponge, which retained all, but on pressure gave back, as required, what it had absorbed.’

“But there were other reasons which prompted Mahommedan princes to employ and encourage Hindus, both at their court and in their armies. They formed a counterbalance to the ambition and turbulence of their relatives, and of the chiefs and followers of their own race. This feeling operated from the emperors on the throne of Delhi, when in the very plentitude of their power, down to the lowest chief : and it is from its action combined with that influence which the wealth and qualities of the Hindus obtained, that we are, in a great measure, to account for the easy establishment and long continuance of the Mahommedan power in India. The new dominion was attended with little of change, except to the

Hindu sovereign and his favourites. *The lesser Rajas (or princes) gave their allegiance and paid tribute to a Mahommedan instead of a Hindu superior, while their condition and local power continued nearly the same.*

"Hindu ministers and officers served probably to greater profit the idle and dissipated Moghul, than they could have done a master of their own tribe ; *and as there was complete religious toleration*, and their ancient and revered usages were seldom or never outraged, they were too divided a people upon other subjects to unite in any effort to expel conquerors, who, under the influence of various motives, left to them almost all, except the name, of power" (*italics are mine*).

During his Viceroyalty, Murshid Kuli Khan employed as his revenue officers and councillors trusty Hindus, and was entirely guided by their advice ; prominent among these were Darpanarayan, Bhupati Roy, Kishore Roy and Jeswant Roy<sup>2</sup> and Raghunandan. Even high military posts were thrown open to the Hindus. Lahory Mull and Dulip Singh, though Hindus, were employed as commandants against recalcitrant defying Hindus. Among zemindars, Ramjivan and his right hand man Dayaram, as also Raghuram held at times important military posts.

During the Nawabship of Ali Verdy, the Hindu Nandalal held the highest military command in the earlier portion of his reign. Raja Janakiram was his most trusty councillor ; his sons Raja Durlavram and Raja Ramnarayan were equally the holders of the highest posts. Chinmoy Roy, Virudatta, Kirtichand, Amrita Roy, Chintamoni Das and Gokul Chand were the leading dignitaries in the revenue departments and later on Raja Rajballav of Dacca from very humble beginning rose to be Naib-Subadar. Rajaram was in a manner his plenipotentiary in negotiations. Dewan Manikchand and Umedram occupied positions of importance. Not only were the Hindus

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<sup>2</sup> Jeswant Roy, who had been one of the ministry of Murshid Kuli Khan, was a wise ruler and an eminent financier. He did everything in his power to foster trade (Bradley-Birt, *l.c.*).

held in high esteem in fiscal affairs but often were entrusted with military commands. Durlavram, Manikchand, later on Mohunlal<sup>3</sup> and Syamsundar showed bravery on the battle field.

In fact the real trouble of Nawab Ali Verdy Khan was owing to the defection and perfidy of the *Moslem* lieutenants; they had not the least scruple in throwing off their allegiance to Ali Verdy and making common cause with the Marhattas. Indeed, not a trace of religious bigotry or communalism is discernible throughout. Self-interest alone is the guiding motive.

It will thus be seen that during the Moslem period from the 13th century uptil the battle of Plassey the Hindus of Bengal had never occasion to feel that they were under an alien rule. The highest offices—civil and military—were thrown open to them. It is again a remarkable fact that with the exception of the Raja of Birbhum all the big zemindars were Hindus. The author of *Nawabi Amal* asserts that only *one-sixteenth share of the zemindaries fell to the lot of the Moslems*.

A casual reader of the history of India is apt to run away with the idea that it was Akbar alone who adopted a policy of religious toleration and sought the co-operation of the Hindus in the administration. It has been pointed out that from the time of Ala-ud-din Khilji no Hindu ever laboured under any civil disabilities.

It will also be abundantly clear that there was no such thing as Moslem solidarity. The Moslem ruler enters into an alliance, offensive and defensive, with the Hindu chief, against his own co-religionist and the Hindu ruler in turn also does the same. The Moslem *as Moslem* is never found to show a jot of communalism.

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<sup>3</sup> When "Meer Jaffer having agreed to separate himself, with a large body of troops, from the Nabob's army" (Malcolm's *CHUE*, Vol. I. p. 254), it was the Bengali Hindu, Mohun Lal and the Bengali Mussulman, Mir Madan, who did not desert the Nabob, showed prowess on the battle field, but could not of course retrieve the fortune of the day.

The Hindus had suffered from foreign invasions from the earliest times, but it often happened that the foreign conquerors were absorbed completely into the Hindu society as the Scythians. With Mohammedan conquerors, however, such absorption was not possible.

"The Muslim civilisation was distinct and individualistic and did not suffer absorption into the Hindu civilisation. The Muslim kings considered their wars as holy *jihads*, destroyed temples, converted the Hindus, and oppressed them. But gradually between the two great communities the spirit of toleration sprang up. The Muslim kings employed Hindu ministers, took the help of Hindu chiefs, married Hindu wives and patronised Hindu literature (especially the vernaculars). The Hindu kings of Vijaynagar employed Muslim soldiers, gave them land, built mosques for them and respected their faith. The Muslim Sultans also employed Hindu soldiers. The intercourse between the Hindus and Muslims in camp brought about a mixture in their language resulting in the origin of the Urdu language. The Muslim king, Zainul Abedin of Kashmir appointed Hindus to state offices and followed a policy of toleration. Similarly Hussain Shah of Bengal was liberal. . . . Vernaculars were also patronised. Bengali owes no small debt to Hussain Shah and Nasrat Shah for its free development unfettered by Sanskrit. The Bengali *Ramayana* of Krittivasa and *Mahabharata* of Kasidasa are the household literature of the Bengalis. The poets, Vidyapati and Chandidasa, sang their exquisite lyrics.

"Reformers of catholic ideas preached the essence of religions, and rose superior to the dead forms of religion, and hard caste rules, and preached the equality and dignity of man as man. Ramananda, a follower of Ramanuja, was a high caste Brahman and preached in Hindi the cult of Ram (and Sita) to all castes, even Chamars or leather workers. The most important of his disciples were Raidas and Kabir. The latter was a weaver by caste. He taught that the God of the Hindus and Muslims is the same, there is no distinction between Ram and Rahim; in fact, all religions were equal. In Maharashtra Namadeva preached in Marathi that the God of the Hindus and Allah of the Muslims is the same One God. Both he and the Brahman saint Eknathia mixed freely with the untouchables, and taught dignity of man as a man. The Bauls of Bengal were preaching that man is man, and is above all caste or religion. Chaitanya flooded Nadiya and Bengal with his Bhakti Cult, taught equality and even had Muslim disciples. Vallabhacharyya established a Vaishnava Cult in Northern India. Nanak taught that truth is equally to be found in Islam and Hinduism, levelled caste distinctions and preached universal toleration.

He had many Muslims as his disciples.—K. P. Mitra : *Indian History for Matriculation*, pp. 112-115.

### III—SPIRIT OF TOLERATION IN INDIA AND IN EUROPE.

The fact is, the Hindu-Moslem *disunion* is of recent manufacture or creation. Three decades ago it was scarcely known. In my days of boyhood during the Durga Pujah festival, my father, grandfather, and great grandfather used to invite the Kazis of Gadaipur (near our native village) to attend the Jattras (*cf.* Vol. I, p. 410) and they invariably responded to the invitation. Such was the case everywhere in Bengal. Perfectly amicable and cordial relations existed between the two great communities.

Bradley-Birt writes thus of the amicable relations between the two communities in 1906 in his *The Romance of an Eastern Capital* :

"Even the Hindus pay homage at the shrine of Sheik Muhammad Yasuf. If the ryot is in fear for his crop, he brings a handful of rice. If his child is ill, or his cattle a prey to disease, he says some small propitiatory offering on the tomb. If the harvest has been plenteous, he gives a bundle of rice straight from the field as a thank-offering. In joy or in sorrow the tomb of the Saint plays its appointed part in the inner life of the people.

"A short distance away, across the fields, there lies the tomb of Pagla Saheb (Madman), so much venerated by both Hindus and Mahomedans that parents offer at it the 'coti' or queue of their children when dangerously ill."

*Cf.* also : "Religious quarrels between Hindus and Mahomedans are of rare occurrence. These two classes live in perfect peace and concord and majority of the individuals belonging to them have even overcome their prejudices so far as to smoke from the same Hookah."—Taylor : *Topography of Dacca* (1840), p. 257.

The contrast between Europe and India in so far as it relates to religious toleration is illuminating.

The history of Europe till lately is emphatically the history of religious persecution of the most revolting type. Not only the crusaders spurred on by the fiery anathemas and phillipics of Peter the Hermit and the like went through harrowing privations in their attempts to rescue the holy

sepulchre from the "infidels", but cruel long-standing wars originating in religious dogmas decimated and disfigured Europe for centuries.

Let me contrast the European crowned heads with their contemporaries in India.

"It was, therefore, with reason that Charles V at the close of his career, could boast that he had always preferred his creed to his country, and that the first object of his ambition had been to maintain the interests of Christianity. The zeal with which he struggled for the faith, also appears in his exertions against heresy in the Low Countries. According to contemporary and competent authorities, from fifty thousand to a hundred thousand persons were put to death in the Netherlands during his reign on account of their religious opinions. . . . But we know that, between 1520 and 1550, he published a series of laws, to the effect that those who were convicted of heresy should be beheaded, or burned alive, or buried alive."—Buckle: *History of Civilization*.

"The Dutch wished to adopt, and in many instances did adopt, the reformed doctrine; therefore Philip (1555-1598) waged against them a cruel war, which lasted thirty years, and which he continued till his death, because he was resolved to extirpate the new creed. He ordered that every heretic who refused to recant should be burned . . . . Of the number of those who actually suffered in the Low Countries, we have no precise information; but Alva triumphantly boasted that, in the five or six years of his administration, he had put to death in cold blood more than eighteen thousand."—*Ibid*.

In comparison with this dismal episode India stands out in bright and bold relief. Into the Malabar coast Mohammedan inroads could not penetrate. In this region the Hindu kings enjoyed absolute immunity—but their spirit of toleration awakens our admiration. The Syrian Christians obtained a footing in Cochin and Travancore as early as the 1st or 2nd century. They were welcomed and offered hospitality and allowed to profess their religious practices without let or hindrance, with the result that to-day we find that fully one-third of the population of Travancore profess the Christian faith. When the Parsis persecuted in the land of their birth sailed to the Bombay coast, the Hindu Raja offered them safe asylum as shown above.

It has been seen that the Hindus during the Moslem Period from the 14th century onwards never laboured under civil disabilities on account of their religion and that a spirit of catholicity and toleration pervaded the policy of the rulers. Whereas within recent times in England not only Catholics but even dissenting Protestants were subjected to vexatious exclusions. Any student of the constitutional history of England is aware of this.

"The 'Test Act' (under Charles II) was intended to exclude all Catholics from office by a test which could not be evaded, and which would consequently compel all office-holders who were Catholics in secret to declare themselves.

"More striking in the popular judgment and equally essential to future progress were the steps taken towards religious toleration.

"The Test Act was at last repealed in 1828. In the next year the even more important 'Catholic Emancipation Act' was passed.

"The act of emancipation admitted Catholics to both houses of parliament and to all public offices, local and national, except a very few. Comparatively little yet remained to be done in this direction, but Jews were not admitted to Parliament until 1858, nor Non-conformists on equal terms to the universities until 1871."—Extract from the *Constitutional History of England* by George Burton Adams, Ed. 1933.

The French philosopher very rightly observes :

"Such, reigning over the greatest empire that has ever been, were those two admirable sovereigns, Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius. History presents but one other example of this heredity of wisdom on the throne, in the persons of the three great Mogul Emperors, Baber, Humaïoun, and Akbar, the last of whom offers such striking points of resemblance to Marcus Aurelius."—Renan : *Marcus Aurelius*.

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## CHAPTER XVI.

### LAW—ITS ADMINISTRATION.

"The revenue has been benefited by a Stamp Act at the cost of the poorest class of cultivators. . . . . Litigation has been greatly increased."—SIR JAMES CAIRD.

"The writers [on India] declare that, precisely in proportion as English courts of justice have extended, have perjury and all evils which perjury introduces into administration of justice prevailed throughout India".—JOHN BRIGHT: *Speeches*, ii. p. 42.

In the pre-British days the village *Panchayet* (lit. an assembly of five) was generally the court of arbitration and it was a very useful institution suited to the simple habits of the people. The decision was generally fair and impartial and swift in execution. All this is now changed. A zemindar now-a-days does not play the role of a dispenser of justice—if he did he would thereby bring himself within the clutches of the Penal Code. The people have also imbibed modern ideas and learned to value the "inestimable blessings" of the British Law Courts. Only when too late they realise that in seeking justice they have courted ruin—they have got justice, but with a vengeance. The hour makes the man. A class of cheats and sharks, in the shape of touts, have sprung up whose trade is to foment litigation and they have the remarkable knack of imposing upon the credulity of the rustics and winning their confidence. These pettifoggers are ever on the alert, and once in their serpentine coil there is no escape for the unfortunate victim (see p. 82). In the permanently settled districts there are interposed between the Government, which is after all the real landlord, the zemindar and the tiller of the soil, diverse sorts of tenures and under-tenures, sometimes as many as thirty as in Backergunge and Faridpur; and as the Hindu, and more so the Mahomedan, law

of succession entails endless division of the ancestral holdings, an abundant crop of litigation is always at hand.<sup>1</sup>

In the civil suit, it often takes years before a final decision is arrived at. What with endless adjournments and postponements—the appeal from the lower court to the higher court—*i.e.* from the Munsiff to the Sub-Judge and from the latter to the High Court, the case drags at each remove a lengthening chain. When it is remembered that both the plaintiff and the respondent have to cite a number of witnesses at each hearing and bear all their travelling expenses and the lawyer's fees, it will easily be understood what the administration of justice means.<sup>2</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> Criticising the Bengal Tenancy Bill in 1884, Sir Roper Lethbridge remarked: "Over Bengal might be written 'If there is a paradise on earth for lawyers it is here.'"

<sup>2</sup> *Cf.* "But they (law suits) appear in many instances to be too heavy on suits for small demands, as will appear by the following statements on a demand for two rupees, which would be much more were the suit for landed property. This the plaintiff was to pay to Government alone, exclusive of the expense of serving the processes before his cause comes to be tried, though it is true that eventually the defendant will have to pay it in addition to his own expenses, *viz.* :

"Stamp paper for plaint, -/4/-; fees for filing ditto, -/2/-; stamp paper for security for Vakeel's fees, -/4/-; fees for filing ditto, -/8/-; stamp paper for security to make good expenses of suit, -/4/-; fees for filing ditto, -/8/-; fees for issuing a summons, -/8/-; stamp paper for a copy of defendant's answers, -/4/-; stamp paper for a copy of rejoinder, -/4/-; fees for filing ditto, -/8/-; stamp paper for petition for issuing subpoenas, -/4/-; fees for filing ditto, -/8/-; fees for three witnesses, 1/8/-; issuing subpoena, -/8/-; two vouchers (only), 1/1/-; total sicca Rs. 7-6-0."—Beveridge: *Bakerganj*, pp. 426-27.

A veteran lawyer of Khulna recently gave me the following data for a suit for recovery of Rs. 500/- (*ex parte*) :

				Rs.	A.	P.
Stamp for plaint	...	...	...	56	4	0
Vakalatnama	...	...	...	1	0	0
Process fee	...	...	...	1	0	0
Pleader's fee	...	...	...	7	8	0

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65 12 0

glorious uncertainty of law is proverbial ; on a slight technical flaw, the higher court upsets the verdict of the lower. The unhappy victim realises, when too late, his folly or infatuation. His cash which often means the store of the year's food-grains is soon exhausted ; his live-stock *i.e.*, plough-cattle, has then to be sold. He must then have recourse to borrowing money at exorbitant rates of interest by mortgaging his holding. He is in fact irretrievably ruined.

Once you have entered into a contest nothing is unfair. All the trickery which human ingenuity can devise is in requisition. Polonius's advice to his son is in point : "Beware of entrance to a quarrel but, being in, bear it, that the opposer may beware of thee". One very expeditious way of harassing the poor untutored ryot into unconditional submission is to file a suit against him at the sowing or reaping season. Every obstacle must be thrown in the way of his cultivating the land, or if he has a smiling crop in the field it must rot : the unhappy victim is dragged away from his homestead and has to dance attendance at the purlieu of the law-court seeking justice, and

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If it is contested and disposed of after adjournment after the appearance of the defendant :

			Ra. A. P.
Stamp for plaint ...	...	...	56 4 0
Process fee ...	...	...	4 0 0
Stamp for Vakalatnama ...	...	...	1 0 0
Process fee for service of summons upon			
4 witnesses ...	...	...	1 0 0
Witnesses' travelling ...	...	...	10 0 0 (minimum).
" diet money ...	...	...	3 0 0
Pleader's fee ...	...	...	15 0 0
			<hr/>
			90 4 0

As a matter of fact a case is seldom disposed of after one adjournment. In a really contested case the expense of witnesses amounts to Rs. 76/- or even to Rs. 100/-. So the minimum cost of a Small Causes Court case may come up to Rs. 150/-.

*Cf. also :* An experienced lawyer of Calcutta (Mr. Taraknath Sadhu) narrates the tragic story of a suit involving realisation of Rs. 3-10-0 which cost each party from Rs. 5,000/- to Rs. 6,000/-.—*Monthly Basumati*, Baisak, 1930.

is thus soon brought to his senses, as the result of which he has to capitulate unconditionally.

I have not referred to the appeals to the Privy Council which in big suits have become of late years a regular feature of litigation entailing still heavier expenses. Justice, as administered in British law-courts, is almost invariably on the side of the longest purse. I need only cite here the cases on points of the Law of Succession, of the Dumraon and the Jharia Raj. It is believed that in the former case half-a-crore of rupees had been spent, and in the Jharia case, on local enquiry, sometime ago, I learned that some twenty-five lakhs had been already squandered.<sup>3</sup> Lawyers know full well that a season of good harvest synchronises with an abundant crop of litigation.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. "It is after twenty-seven years' proceedings that the end of a litigation relating to a will between near relatives in Bengal is at last in sight, by the judgment of the Privy Council—indeed, a striking instance of Law's delays, the repeated warnings of the authorities in India notwithstanding.

"Lord Blanesburgh who delivered the Privy Council's judgment condemned the extravagance characterising the litigation and said such expenditure was enough to 'bring the administration of the law into deserved disrepute'. My sincerest sympathy for the learned judges who must feel very uncomfortable at these unkind remarks of his lordship.

"By the bye at long last it is the Subordinate Judge's judgment that has been upheld and the High Court's decision against that judgment set aside. Legal wisdom is thus not the monopoly of the highest in the judiciary". The above is taken from a recent issue of the *Bengalee*.

<sup>4</sup> The state of things in the Punjab is exactly comparable to that obtaining in Bengal. Says Darling:

"There is one aspect of rural life in the Punjab which is commonly quoted as an example of the cultivator's extravagance and that is his almost passionate love of litigation. It is not uncommon to hear of suits dealing with the minutest fraction of an acre being fought up to the High Court, and of criminal cases involving the expenditure of thousands of rupees.

"In districts where there are great fluctuations of harvest every lawyer knows that his income will contract or expand in ratio to the quality of the harvest, which is a sign that the villager is quick to go off to the courts when he has any spare cash in his pocket. . . . Not only have pleaders to be engaged and stamp duty and process fees to be paid but petty officials have to be propitiated—their demands are

Major Vanrenen, a big Zemindar in the Montgomery district and in Sind, who is in direct touch with his tenants, recently (Nov. 4, 1933) said :

"The extreme indebtedness, poverty, and hopelessness of India's millions are not of their own fault, but are due to a wrong financial system, and also I may add, to an expensive system of justice and a wrongly framed law. The law of contract is one-sided, and gives no protection to the poor and ignorant."

#### I—DILATORINESS OF BRITISH LAW.

The Meerut (Conspiracy?) case, which dragged on for four years and odd months is notorious on account of unprecedented duration. It created a good deal of noise and stir even in the British Parliament because among the accused were a few Englishmen. It cost the Government (*i.e.*, the public funds) some 13 to 15 lakhs of rupees. The sufferings of the accused were intolerable ; one died from the effects of anxiety. Our Feudatories who always borrow a leaf from the British Government in matters of extravagance often go one better, as is exemplified by the *Riyasat* Case.

"The *Pratap*, an Urdu daily of Lahore, publishes that from a statement of accounts submitted by Mr. Mahomed Akram, Inspector General of Police, of the expenditure made in the case filed by Nawab of Bhopal against the Urdu paper, *Riyasat*, it has been learnt that within the course of three-and-a-half years, Rs. 65,800 was spent only on travelling and railway fare. Besides this amount, there were fees of lawyers and other expenses. Taking all together, the total amount nears to five lacs of rupees."—Daily paper, June 26/33.

"Mr. G. L. Subehdar, Assistant Judicial Commissioner, delivered judgment in the sensational *Riyasat* Case setting aside the conviction of Sardar Diwan Singh under the Princes' Protection Act and directing a retrial of the case at Hoshangabad. The learned Judicial Commissioner held that the trial in the lower court was vitiated on points of law."—*United Press*, Sept. 26/34.

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said to have risen with the rise of prices—witnesses may have to be hired, as much to prove what is true as to establish what is false, and perhaps the support of an influential neighbour has to be gained, all of which consumes both time and money."

The *Statesman* recently (Dec. 9, 1931) in noticing Claud Mullins' *In Quest of Justice* observes:

"Lord Birkenhead recognised, as well he might, that it was quite possible for a plaintiff to win his case and to recover his taxed costs and yet to be out of pocket at the end—worse off than if he had waived his claim. A German observer has remarked that a law-suit in England is so dear that it is only possible for a rich man. It seems to be the fact that in Germany a money suit for about Rs. 700 would go through by each side spending about Rs. 60 in lawyer's fees. The British Chamber of Commerce reported that the average legal expenses of each side in a contested action for 7,000 Marks (£350) would be about £40. Compare this as a matter of proportion with the figures given at pages 203 and 205 of Mr. Mullins' book. In one case, in a claim for £40,000, the taxed costs of one side only amounted to £89,000. Much of the financial hardship thus exposed is brought about by the curious demand for 'fashionable' Counsel who are thus able, and do not scruple, to demand enormous fees. These fees are payable even, when by the pressure of other business they do not, because they cannot, give more attention to the case than could be honestly valued at a £5 note. Few members of the Bar would go to such men if they became involved in litigation themselves. . . . You can spend as much as you choose upon Surgeons, Counsel, Dentists and Tailors, but it by no means follows that he who pays most is best served."

Mr. C. P. Harvey, a practising lawyer, in his *Solon or the Price of Justice* (1931), has some very sound observations to make on the costliness, dilatoriness and uncertainties of English law. A few pertinent quotations are given below:

"This author (William Durran) contends that the lawyer is nothing but an incubus, an old man of the Sea who has squatted for generations on the shoulders of society. Such social progress as we can see around us has resulted not because of, but in spite of, the efforts of legal profession, whose interest has always been to render the law incomprehensible to all but its members. Our legal history, says Mr. Durran, is deplorable.

"Litigation is a luxury within the reach only of millionaires and paupers. For the man of moderate means it is far cheaper to settle disputes out of court or simply to leave them unsettled. [Unless a man declares himself entirely without means the State does not lend him help.]

"It is a common experience for a successful plaintiff who has recovered judgment for about £25 to find himself only a few pounds

in pocket as the result, while his adversary's expenses will amount to £50 or more.

"Accordingly this dispute about £120 cost the merchant several thousands of pounds. And the immediate cause of the catastrophe was the fact that so many judges thought that he was right. But the overriding cause was the ramifications of the legal system. Even if he had won the case in the House of Lords he would still have been considerably out of pocket.

"It would not be difficult to multiply instances where the expenses of actions in the High Court have proved entirely disproportionate to the value of the matter at stake. A party who goes to law can never know what the case may cost him in the end, or whether his opponent will run him through the whole gamut of appeal tribunals. If he does, the plaintiff may be out of pocket even though he ultimately wins his case. If he loses it, he may be ruined."

The old *Panchayet* system or even the faulty and imperfect, nay corrupt, procedure of administering justice by the Zemindar or his agents was on the whole conducive to the welfare of the ryot.<sup>5</sup>

Reference has already been made to the farcical character of proceedings being conducted in a foreign tongue (p. 63). Sir Henry Cotton, in his *Indian and Home Memories*, narrates :

\* Cf. "The inert Bengali landowner living from youth to age in his ancestral home and distributing a rude and unequal justice among his tenantry etc."—Beveridge : *Bakerganj*, 1878, p. 386.

Cf. "The native litigant who had a good case preferred to appeal to the *Panchayet* but he who had a bad one sought the decision of a Collector . . . for discriminating the motives of action and the chances of truth in the evidence . . . the *Panchayet* an admirable instrument . . . and lawyers were becoming numerous as the result of a false education."—Ramsay MacDonald : *Awakening of India*, pp. 116-17.

"I think that we should look forward to the time when India can be left to herself, and that we should hasten its coming by putting the internal administration more and more into the hands of natives. For example, probably nearly all the judicial offices in Bengal might be held by natives. They will work for less pay than Europeans, and their knowledge of the language and customs of the people, and their not requiring long furloughs to Europe in order to recruit their strength, give them an immense advantage over foreigners. I do not overlook the advantages possessed by Europeans, but I think that none of them counterbalances the superiority of the Bengalis in the above mentioned points."—Beveridge : *Bakerganj*, p. 396.

"I was never a good linguist, but I learned to speak Bengalee fluently and Hindustani colloquially, and could write and read the Bengalee and Persian characters with facility. It was much easier to learn the vernacular languages then than it is now. All the ordinary work of the office was done in the vernacular; very few of the clerks knew English, and the pleadings in court were always in Bengalee. Nowadays all this is changed; an English-speaking class of court officials has come into existence; the pleaders or *mukhtars*, who knew no English in my day, now all plead in that language, and the young civilian is no longer compelled, as it were, to think and speak in the vernacular if he is to transact any business at all. For my part, when I was in charge of a Subdivision a year or two later I did the whole of my office work in Bengalee except correspondence, and for weeks and months together spoke no other language while in office."

Owing to the dilatory and costly nature of litigation, experienced opinion even in England is veering round settlement of disputes by conciliation board.

"Sir Edward Parry recently said that litigation was usually so expensive that it was almost out of the reach of the poor. . . . The other day he read of a divorce action the costs in which amounted to £20,000.<sup>6</sup> That might be all right for rich people, but not for the poor. A good deal of what was recovered in litigation went in costs. He had calculated that over a period of years about 10s. in the pound of the amounts recovered in the country courts went in fees and costs. . . . To his mind litigation was out of date because of the enormous delay and cost. Looking back over the thirty-three years that he was a County Court Judge, he believed that if he could have got at the poor people before they had spent a penny he could have settled from 75 to 80 per cent. of their cases and saved their money. Abraham Lincoln, who was a great lawyer, and whose training was largely gained in dealing with poor people's cases, once said: 'A good settlement is better than a doubtful law suit'.

"The principle he was advocating was not new. It was in operation in the Scandinavian countries—in Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. In these countries from 80 to 90 per cent. of the cases were first brought before the conciliation courts, and most of them were decided by the official conciliator. That was the main principle of his proposal. No doubt some lawyers would lose fees. The treasury, too, would lose fees,

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. "Criminal proceedings against Cardinal Newman for libel, resulted in an acknowledged gross miscarriage of justice. He was found guilty and was sentenced to pay a fine of £100, while his expenses as defendant amounted to about £14,000—*Encycl. Brit.*, 11th ed.



and any scheme of betterment which would cause the treasury to lose half a crown would be very difficult to see through in this country."

New China is making a right move in this matter. There the civil litigants must attempt mediation before legal action.

"According to a report from Nanking on August 1, the newly promulgated law governing mediation in civil disputes and procedure of mediation is expected to do away with much unnecessary and expensive litigation in the courts. A spokesman of the Judicial Yuan in reference to the new law stated that it stipulated that before a civil action is brought in the Court, a settlement through mediation must first be attempted and the Courts have been instructed not to entertain petitions in civil actions unless mediation had first been attempted. The law provides for the organisation of a mediation bureau which will be attached to all courts, the board to be composed of three members to be selected by the parties to the dispute with a Judge of the Court acting as Chairman. *Legal practitioners are prohibited from serving as mediators.* The purpose of the new regulation, according to the Judicial Yuan, is to relieve parties to civil disputes from heavy expenditures for professional services and also to relieve the courts from congestion caused by the filing of cases which might be mediated."—*The China Weekly Review*, Aug. 9, 1930.

The elaborate machinery of civil law—codified and methodised—and the criminal code based upon Roman jurisprudence with centuries of additional details imported *en bloc* are utterly unsuited to the habits and instincts of the people. It is forgotten that 95 per cent. of our peasantry, I had almost said 100 per cent., are ignorant and illiterate and 50 per cent. of these again live on the verge of starvation. For them the British law-court is too much of a luxury. You might as well ask them to drive in a Rolls Royce or travel in a Pullman car.<sup>7</sup> Macaulay who himself was the first Law-member during the

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<sup>7</sup> How litigiousness sucks away the life-blood of the people may well be illustrated by another tangible instance. The railway services (as between Khulna and Calcutta) as also bus and narrow gauge railways with corresponding inland steamer runnings have of late years become a regular feature throughout the land. Swarms of litigants thus daily pour in from the remote quarters. The huge profits from these rapid means of transport swell the pockets of the British capitalists and are a source of additional drain of wealth.

Governor-Generalship of Lord William Bentinck wrote in 1841 in his *Essay on Warren Hastings* :

"There are few Englishmen who will not admit that the English law, inspite of modern improvements, is neither so cheap nor so speedy as might be wished. Still, it is a system which has grown up among us. In some points, it has been fashioned to suit our feelings; in others, it has gradually fashioned our feelings to suit itself. Even to its worst evils we are accustomed; and therefore, though we may complain of them, they do not strike us with horror and dismay which would be produced by a new grievance of smaller severity. In India the case is widely different. English law transplanted to that country, has all the vices from which we suffer here; it has them all in a far higher degree; and it has other vices, compared with which the worst vices from which we suffer are trifles. Dilatory here, it is far more dilatory in a land where the help of an interpreter is needed by every judge and by every advocate. Costly here, it is far more costly in a land into which the legal protection must be imported from the labour of the Governor-General and the Commander-in-Chief, down to that of a groom or a watchmaker, and must be paid for at a higher rate than at home. No man will be banished, and banished to the torrid zone, for nothing. The rule holds good with respect to the legal profession. No English Barrister will work fifteen thousand miles from all his friends, with the thermometer at ninety-six in the shade, for the emolument which will content him in chambers that overlook the Thames. Accordingly the fees at Calcutta are about three times as great as the fees of Westminster Hall, and this, though the people of India are beyond all comparison, poorer than the people of England."

In the celebrated soliloquy of Hamlet the immortal bard complains bitterly of the "law's delay" which impels one to put a period to his existence. The following extracts from Carlyle's *Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches* (1897) may be quoted here with advantage :

Cromwell "spake somewhat against Lawyers, what a tortuous ungodly jungle English Law was".

"Cynical Law-Pedant, and invincible living heap of learned rubbish".  
—*ibid.*, I. 74.

Again, "my erudite friend, the astonishing intellect that occupies itself in splitting hairs, and not in twisting some kind of cordage and

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\* Although the distance has now been abridged and the Indian barristers have practically captured the bar, the fees far from being reduced have rather gone up.

effectual draught—tackle to take the road with, is not to me the most astonishing of intellects.”—*ibid.*, III., 5.

“But alas . . . finding grievances greater than could be borne; finding, for one thing, ‘Twenty-three thousand causes of from five to thirty years’ continuance lying undetermined in Chancery, it seemed to the Little Parliament that some Court ought to be contrived which would actually determine these and the like causes; and that, on the whole, Chancery would be better for abolition. Vote to that effect stands registered in the Commons Journals, but still, for near two hundred years, now, only expects fulfilment’.”—*ibid.*, III., 79.

“What is ‘Incumbrance’? No mortal can tell. They sit debating it, painfully sifting it, ‘for three months’; three months by Booker’s Almanac, and the Zodiac Horologe: March violets have become June roses; and still they debate what ‘Incumbrance’ is;—and indeed, I think could never fix it at all, and are perhaps debating it, if so doomed, in some twilight foggy section of Dante’s Nether World, to all Eternity, at this hour!—Are not these a set of men to reform English Law?”—*ibid.*, III., 17.

“And I remember well, at the old Parliament we were three months, and could not get over the word ‘Incumbrance’ and we thought there was little hope of ‘regulating the Law’ where there was such difficulty as to that. But surely the Laws need to be regulated’.”—*ibid.*, IV., 104.

“But the Lawyers exclaimed, ‘Chancery? Law of the Bible? Do you mean to bring in the Mosaic Dispensation, then; and deprive men of their properties; and us of our learned wigs and lucrative long-windedness—with our search for ‘Simple justice’ and ‘God’s Law’ instead of Learned—Sergeant’s Law’”—*ibid.*, III., 79.

Our paternal Government—a huge soulless machine—looks complacently on as it derives a large income from the administration of law or justice, in the shape of stamps and court-fees. Even eminent English writers on India have been known to pronounce their considered opinion that the British rulers actually *sell justice*.<sup>9</sup> Unfortunately no reform in this

<sup>9</sup> Every Moonsiff on an average earns for the Government about 30 to 40 thousand rupees per year.

“The whole cost of the administration of justice in Bengal, both civil and criminal, including all judicial salaries, is borne by civil litigants.

direction can be looked forward to as our political leaders are practically recruited from the legal profession and these are the very people who, from the mere instinct of self-preservation, are interested in the perpetuation of the present pernicious system. These parasites wax fat by sucking the life-blood of the rural population and of the Zemindars. It would be futile to expect any movement for the reform of the administration of justice from the gentlemen of the long gown. You might as well appeal to the tiger to give up its carnivorous instinct and take to grass. Once you create vested interests, you create along with them their powerful supporters. If the great and masterful Lord Protector of England proved powerless, nay, had to quail before the storm of indignation he had raised, it is not to be expected that any spasmodic or feeble efforts will prove of any avail.

## II—ADMINISTRATION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE.

An eminent Chief Justice of Bengal, Sir Richard Garth, wrote in 1893 in a booklet, "A few plain truths about India" thus: "When the functions of a policeman, a magistrate and a judge are all united in the same officer it is vain to look for justice to the accused. . . . It is only wonderful that a system so indefensible should have been allowed to prevail thus long under an English Government." At a later date, a high officer of the Government of India, Sir Harvey Adamson, said: "Can any Government be strong whose administration of justice is

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"In the 'Report on the Administration of Civil Justice in the Presidency of Bengal during the year 1932, it is stated that the receipts of the High Court on the Original Side were over Rs. 23 lacs, or, omitting probate and administration duty, nearly 8 lacs, whereas the expenditure was under 5¼ lacs, leaving a profit of approximately 15 lacs. The receipts of the Civil Courts in Bengal and of the High Court on the Appellate Side, amounted to 185 lacs (an increase of over 12¼ lacs), whereas the expenditure amounted to under 79 lacs (a decrease of over 4¼ lacs). Including the amount realised on account of duty on Probate the profit to Government from civil litigation amounted to Rs. 106,07,820 and excluding this item to Rs. 72,31,990."—N. C. Chunder : *The A. B. Patrika*, April 26/34.

not entirely above suspicion"? The present Indian Government which is constantly forging fresh weapons in order to be able to maintain law and order in the land, cannot claim to be a strong Government. But our rulers believe that a strong executive dealing out "executive justice" is the only thing India needs. A writer in the *Calcutta Review* said in 1897 that the idea of what is termed "a strong judge" means a judicial officer whose strength consists in convicting without evidence. An I. C. S. man who signed himself "Judge", stated nakedly in 1912 in a letter to the *Times* that for the purpose of efficient district administration it was necessary to convict criminals on unsupported police evidence.

I have said and cited enough to prove that the proud boast that under the British Government justice, as administered between man and man, is pure and unadulterated is to be received with reservation. It is dilatory and ruinous to the people, and partakes of the nature of a gamble and luxury which few can afford. Those who live in Calcutta (*i.e.*, within the jurisdiction of the Fort William) have to go to the High Court (Original Side), which means that you have to approach the counsel through the attorneys. The procedure involves not only interminable delay, but spells ruin to the parties seeking justice. Litigation like freedom's battle is bequeathed from the bleeding sire to son and finally ends in financial disaster.

An experienced judicial officer to whom this chapter was submitted in manuscript has favoured me with the following observations.

"The public have little confidence in the courts of law. The litigant public at large have mainly to do with the subordinate courts of law, and there they come face to face with a situation which is nothing short of distressing. At the bottom there are the corrupt *amlas* ever ready to fleece, and at the head there are the judicial officers supposed to be responsible for every thing going on, but in reality who are nothing but overworked machines for 'clearing the files' having very little independence or time to see or think what is what. The genesis of a condition like this is not far to seek. The subordinate judiciary has

to work under a perpetual strain because of the enormous pressure of work and besides its angle of vision is always deflected by the intervention of the superior officers and by an artificial standard obtaining for assessing its merit. It is almost an open secret that the promotion of a subordinate judicial officer depends more upon the quantitative disposal of his work than upon its inherent quality. A form like this cannot but hamper dispensation of substantial justice by subordinate officers, who become naturally prone to make a fetish of 'disposal'. And as a matter of that the word 'disposal' is almost a charm word with the judicial officers, and about disposal they simply behave ridiculously. Between themselves the only topic they would hungrily discuss is about their respective disposals. They would compare notes and perchance one officer has to his credit a better record of disposal than another, the latter would brood over it and pass sleepless nights lest the lesser output of his work might be the cause of an immediate rebuff or an obstacle to his future promotion. There can be no gainsaying that 'disposalism'—if such an expression might be coined—has created a positive vicious outlook psychologically amongst the judicial officers creating a deadlock of their judicial honesty and sometimes even conscientiousness. Thus justice is soiled for the sake of disposal. A case has to be disposed of no matter how, no matter whether justice is done or not, for disposal is the key to success in official life. Nothing can be more deplorable. Then it may not be known to the general public that 'tardy justice' which is the burden of criticism against law courts, is due to the fact that every judicial officer has to cope with more work than he can physically handle. The work every officer has to do is simply colossal. In court he has to work hard for disposing of cases and at home he has to write out judgments. He works and works all the waking hours of the day and consequently he has to lose touch with the outside world and all its progresses and problems and slowly and imperceptibly becomes queer and angular in his social life and enormously ignorant of everything else than his own work. And even in the matter

of dispensing justice he has an eye more upon the narrow technicalities of law than upon substantial justice. It is no wonder therefore that the course of justice is not only costly but also precarious and that the subordinate courts are full of corruption because the judicial officers have no time to look to things personally but have to depend upon the *amlas* in most things unconnected with the actual disposal of cases. And it is equally well-known that the *amlas* of the court are open to constant temptation because every litigant would like to steal a march over his opponent, if he can, by paying secret bribes. And it being known that the judicial officers can hardly keep an eye upon what their subordinates do, the latter are put to constant persuasion by litigants and even by their pleaders to hamper justice for a price. Thus corruption at the bottom and an imbecile hankering for disposal on the part of the judicial officers at the cost of their health and efficiency and fairmindedness have brought about an unenviable state of affairs, so much so that the law courts have become so many places of gambling ; and people come there only when they are driven to extremes. And it is not a matter of little disgrace that there are many who do not hesitate to take advantage of the courts of law, sometimes successfully, for the pursuit of their petty gains or for giving vent to their spleen or for crushing innocent men supposed to be in their way. Thousand pities that the courts of law, with their corrupt *amlas* and over-worked, narrowminded and timid judiciary have become places of dread."

### III—ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE DURING THE MUSLIM RULE IN INDIA.

The following extracts will throw light on the subject :

#### AKBAR'S IDEA OF JUSTICE.

Speaking of this Emperor Mr. Vincent Smith quotes from the *A'yn-i-Akbari* the saying of Akbar, "If I were guilty of an unjust act, I would rise in judgment against myself," and then observes—"The saying was not merely a copy-book maxim. He honestly tried to do justice according to his lights in the summary fashion of his age and

country.”—Wahed Hosain: *Administration of Justice under Moslem Rule*, p. 32.

Akbar used to decide suits and hear appeals at his *Daulat-khánah* (the Chamber of Audience in the Palace) “generally after 9 o’clock in the morning when all people are admitted.” But “this assembly is sometimes held in the evening and sometimes at night. He also frequently appears at a window which opens into the *Daulat-khánah* and from thence he receives petitions without the intervention of any person, and tries and decides upon them.”—*l.c.* p. 34.

“Both Sháh Jahán and Aurangzeb held no public court on Wednesday, but reserved that day for holding a court of law. The Emperor came direct from the *darshan* window to the *Diwán-i-Khás* (or Hall of Private Audience) at 8 A.M. and sat on the throne of justice till midday. This room was filled with the law-officers of the Crown, the judges of Canon Law (*Qázis*), judges of Common Law (*ádils*), Muftis, theologians (*Ulama*), Jurists learned in precedents (*fatwás*), the superintendent of the law court (*darogha-i-adálat*), and the Kotwál or prefect of the City police. None else among the courtiers was admitted unless his presence was specially necessary. The officer of justice presented the plaintiffs one by one and reported their grievances. His Majesty gently ascertained the facts by enquiry, took the law from the *Ulamá* and pronounced judgment accordingly.”—J. N. Sarkar: *Moghal Administration*, quoted by Wahed Hosain, *l.c.* pp. 39-40.

#### ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE IN THE REIGN OF JAHANGIR.

“The most noticeable and attractive feature of the Royal Court were the golden chain and bells hung up by the Emperor Jahángir. One end of the chain was fastened to the battlement of the Sháh Burj of the fort of Agra, and the other to a stone post fixed on the bank of the river. Jahángir loved to do justice and took keen interest in its administration. This device was adopted by the Emperor so that litigants and the aggrieved persons could tie their petitions to be drawn up to the Emperor and avoid the harassment of the porters and court-underlings.”—*l.c.* p. 41.

#### ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE IN THE REIGN OF SHAH JAHAN.

“The reign of Sháh Jahán is notable for peace and prosperity. The French traveller Tavernier speaks of the reign of Shah Jahan as like that of a father over his family, and being a pious Muslim abolished the ceremony of prostration which was directly against Islámic injunctions. Sháh Jahán himself heard petitions and fixed Wednesday as the days for the administration of justice.”—H. M. Elliot: *History of India*, Vol. VII, pp. 170-73.



"The reasons for the paucity of cases and lack of litigation are obvious. In the *first place*, there was no passion for litigation. People lived a simple life unaware of law's crookedness. . . . *Secondly*, the country had peace and prosperity, and the people lived self-contented under a strong government. *Thirdly*, the ordinary quarrels and caste-disputes were settled by the village *Punch* which exercised great influence upon the people in rural areas. The Muslim Government never interfered with the village autonomy; on the contrary, they encouraged it and left the rural affairs in the hand of the village *Pancháyat*."—Wahed Hosain, *l.c.* p. 46.

#### ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE IN THE REIGN OF AURANGZIB.

"Aurangzib's idea of justice may be gathered from his letters. In one of them, written to Shaá Jahán, he says, 'Sovereignty is the guardianship of the people and not for self-indulgence and profligacy.' As he was a stern puritan, so was he a strict dispenser of justice. The author of the *Mirdat-i-A'lam* gives the following description of this Emperor.

"He appears two or three times every day in his court of audience with a pleasing countenance and mild look, to dispense justice to complainants who came in numbers without any hindrance, and as he listens to them with great attention, they make their representations' without any fear or hesitation, and obtain redress from his impartiality." (quoted from Elliot's *History of India*, Vol. vii. p. 158).

Alexander Dow in his *History of India* gives the following account of Aurangzib's mode of dealing out justice :

"He knew that the power and consequence of the prince depended upon the prosperity and happiness of the people; and he was even from selfish views an enemy to oppression, and encourager of agriculture and commercial industry. He established a perfect security of property over all his dominions. The forms of justice were made less intricate and more expeditious than in former reigns.

"Capital punishments were almost totally unknown under Aurangzib. The adherents of his brothers who contended with him for the empire, were freely pardoned when they laid down their arms."—Dow.

On the subject of punishment Pringle Kennedy, the author of the *History of the Great Mughals*, observes :

"My reader will note with surprise that Aurangzib was slow to punish, but the history of his whole reign shows that save in cases where he feared for his throne, particularly from his relations, he was exceedingly lenient. Pyramids of skulls had no fascination for him.

We read nowhere in his reign of massacres, nor of cruelty such as is to be found in the annals of the earlier Mughals."

It is the fashion now-a-days among certain writers to take for granted that in the time of the Nawabs of Bengal justice as between man and man was unknown and that impartial administration of justice is one of the manifold blessings of British Rule. Numerous instances, however, may be adduced in proof of the fact that cheap, expeditious and even-handed justice was often meted out.

"Moorshid Cooly Khan devoted two days in the week to the administration of justice and so impartial was he in his decision and so rigid in the execution of the sentences of the law, that he sent his son to death for an infraction of its regulations. [In this respect he may be compared to Lucius Junius Brutus].

"Vakeels were continually in search of complaints and whenever they met with any person who had reason to be dissatisfied they used every endeavour to pacify him, but if it happened that a well-founded complaint reached the ears of Moorshid Cooly the offender was sure to suffer severely. If officers of justice out of partiality or respect to rank, neglected to redress the meanest person, upon the representation thereof from the party aggrieved, the Nawab tried the case himself, and in his decisions showed neither favour nor affection to anyone, the rich and the poor bearing equal value in his sight."—Stewart: *History of Bengal*."

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## CHAPTER XVII.

### EXPENSIVE HABITS OF OUR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS.

I have given elsewhere some examples from England and America and from India as well of men born in the ranks who have worked their way up. In Bengal, or for the matter of that in India, our boys have to be spoon-fed from the beginning. Even their guardians have strange notions of dignity.

The average college student is supplied with a monthly allowance varying from Rs. 40 to Rs. 50. Being a "scholar" he is treated as something sacrosanct. His parents who often deny themselves the bare necessities of life or even mortgage their homesteads or lands so as to meet the monthly remittances do all the drudgery of the household. During the holidays<sup>1</sup> the young hopefuls being exempted from the so-called menial work, waste their precious time in gossiping, card-playing and in organising amateur theatrical shows or in an extra dose of sleep in the afternoon. In ancient India, however, the scholar, while receiving instructions under the *Guru* in the *Asram* (hermitage as residential quarter), had to tend the cow, collect fuel, look after agricultural operations; in brief, he had to earn in order to learn.

#### I—RESIDENTIAL HOSTELS AND WESTERNISATION.

Hostels, specially those that are under Government supervision, have begun to be so many hot-beds for the dissemination of the anti-swadeshi cult. It was in an evil moment that Lord Hardinge, though no doubt from the best of motives, granted some 15 lakhs of rupees to the Calcutta private colleges for the construction of palatial hostels equipped with all the amenities of modern "civilized" life. A student living in these

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<sup>1</sup> In the Intermediate and Bachelor Course of two years each there is generally six months' holiday and in the Post-graduate Course full seven months' recess in the year.

so-called residential hostels cannot manage on less than Rs. 45 a month. Most of them, however, exceed the limit. Some of my Punjabi friends living in Calcutta assure me that in the Punjab, especially in the city of Lahore, the cost of maintaining their boys or wards often runs up to as much as Rs. 100 a month and even more, and they simply skin their parents.<sup>2</sup> I have myself been several times there and can verify the statement. Our authorities have Cambridge and Oxford before their mind's eye and they want to transplant them here. The students must have blazers and trousers for tennis, flannel suits for cricket. Their toilet again costs a mint of money. In fact, every student brought up under such pernicious atmosphere becomes a missionary for the foreign exploiters. Five years ago while I was in Paris I found on inquiry that there were thousands of students from Poland and the adjacent countries who boarded and lodged on an allowance which would appear to us ridiculously small. Even now in the University of Prague, one of the oldest in Europe, where the best scientific and literary education is imparted, students have to manage on incredibly small means.

No wonder Mr. Bernard Shaw should denounce Oxford and Cambridge as breeding grounds of snobbery and would, if he had power, raze those two universities to the ground. No wonder Mr. Ramsay MacDonald should authoritatively declare: "I believe University life does more harm than good to most men".

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<sup>2</sup> A Panjabi gentleman says: "The illiterate, rich cultivators of canal districts of the Punjab send their sons to be "educated" at the Lahore Colleges. They (1) spend from rupees one hundred to three hundred per month; (2) attend almost daily the cinemas; (3) buy regularly from European shops; (4) dress and live in Western style; (5) cheat parents by writing false letters, *e.g.*, a blotter is worth fifty rupees; (6) are encouraged by European teachers in their work of Westernisation; (7) smoke cigarettes *ad nauseum*, and do worse things."

The Punjab University Inquiry Committee's Report says: "We have received much evidence that earnest studiousness is declining, that students are becoming alarmingly frivolous and extravagant, that habits of intemperance and gambling are increasingly prevalent and that sexual immorality is not rare among them."

And what is the average earning capacity of a graduate? I inquired of Prof. K. T. Shah, a high authority, the other day as to the average income of graduates in Bombay. He assured me that it could not exceed Rs. 25 per month.<sup>3</sup> This is also my calculation of the average income of graduates in Madras and Calcutta. Evidently the Land of the Five Rivers overflows with milk and honey otherwise such a state of things should not have prevailed there!

Herbert Spencer talking of fashion in England says: "Life *à la mode* instead of being life conducted in the most rational manners, is life regulated by spend-thrifts and idlers, milliners and tailors, dandies and silly women."

"Pie on the education and 'culture' which teach you to discard the home-spun in favour of the flimsy and fine texture of the foreign mills! Pie on the education and 'culture' which teach you to look upon the *hooka* and the *forshi* as relics of barbarism. If you will insist upon smoking cigarettes, why not smoke the indigenous cigarettes, the *biris*? But then the powdered tobacco in the *biri* is genuine swadeshi enclosed in swadeshi leaves, whereas the cigarettes contain the *bideshi* doctored-up drug with a golden colour and rolled up in thin flimsy *bideshi* papers and you are instrumental in draining away 2 crores of rupees annually in this alone. I have visited some of the *biri* factories round about Gondia and was informed that in that barren, parched area of the Central Provinces almost 50,000 men, women, boys and girls earn, on an average, one to two annas a day. Thus, this pre-eminent home-industry is the means of bringing a morsel of bread to half-a-lakh of hungry mouths. Now, who are the purchasers of these *biris*? Not the highly placed officials and successful lawyers, nor the college-educated youths boasting of 'culture', but the coolies, carters and such-like folks. The so-called intelligentsia are so many parasites fattening upon the sweated labour of the masses, the tillers of the soil, the real producers of wealth, and are instruments of the draining away of the wealth of the land."—*Vide* my address on the opening ceremony of the Lahore Exhibition (Dec. 20, 1929).

The student, when he comes to town from the rural districts, imitates his comrades and imbibes costly habits. His clothes have to be washed not by the ordinary *Dhobi* (washer-

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<sup>3</sup> This was written four or five years ago; the unemployment of the graduates throughout India has since become an awful problem.

man) but by the "Dyeing and Cleaning" firms, his hair must be cropped not by the ordinary barber but in the fashionable "Hair-cutting Saloons". Then in the afternoon he has his refreshments in the "Restaurants" springing up mushroom-like in the Indian quarters of the town. In the evening he goes to the cinema at least twice a week. He conveniently forgets how much his poor parents have to pinch themselves to meet these expenses. There is a certain degree of selfishness bordering almost on meanness on the part of the "scholar" in thus levying forced contributions and spending them on luxury. Of course a student may be justified in drawing upon his guardian's resources for his expenses, but these should be limited to the irreducible minimum.<sup>4</sup>

Almost contemporaneously with me H. G. Wells was living in London. He had been granted a free-studentship at the Normal School of Science, South Kensington, carrying with it a maintenance grant of a guinea a week.

"Twice in my time undernourished men fainted altogether in the Laboratory. I paid in health for South Kensington all my life." Again, "I had to live on my weekly guinea. By 1887, it (my body) had become a scandalously skinny body. I was as light, as thin as I have said because I was undernourished"—H. G. Wells: *Autobiography*, Vol. I.

I have stated in the proper place that at Edinburgh (1882-88) I could live fairly comfortably on £100 a year supple-

<sup>4</sup> Those who light-heartedly fleece their guardians might profitably read the following:

"It was a hard life. In the winter father and I had to rise and breakfast in the darkness, reach the factory before it was daylight, and, with a short interval for lunch, work till after dark. The hours hung heavily upon me and in the work itself I took no pleasure; but the cloud had a silver lining, as it gave me the feeling that I was doing something for my world—our family. I have made millions since, but none of those millions gave me such happiness as my first week's earnings. I was now a helper of the family, a bread-winner, and no longer a total charge upon my parents."—Andrew Carnegie: *Autobiography*, p. 34.

This self-made man gave away in benefactions, all told, something over \$350,000,000, i.e. one hundred crores of rupees.

mented by occasional remittances from home. Living was much cheaper there than in London. My landlady used to supply an abundance of coal for heating the room free of charge, while in London for every scuttle of coal the charge was 6d. extra.

Cinema-goers suffer from something like alcoholic craving. Boys are known to deprive themselves of refreshments and thus save money for cinema tickets. Many college students though they suffer from malnutrition must needs frequent cinema houses. A young medical friend of mine who feels keenly on the subject writes to the papers :

"Cinema Talkie houses are springing up like mushroom throughout Calcutta and in mofussil towns—not only in Bengal but also all over India. Apart from economic question, they are, in many places, doing positive mischief to the country. The artistic, recreative, and educative values of the film-shows are being thrown in the back-ground and most of the films, are characterised by scenes and talks which are calculated to stimulate sex-desire among people and its effect on young mind—specially the young students, both males and females—is decidedly harmful. The young students should be protected from this moral damage at this young age when the sex-instinct just begins physiologically to be on the increase and the responsibility ought to lie on educational bodies. Some of the posters which are posted in public places along public streets to the rude gaze of the public are so very obscene, containing figures, males and females, in all sorts of objectionable postures and dress that they cannot be looked at; yet they cannot but attract the eyes of all the passers-by,—including boys and girls, and others, who even do not think of going to the cinemas and their effect on the society is surely demoralising.

"I have published my emphatic protest against them on various occasions and there should be a stop to these sorts of films or parts of films and posters. I am sorry most of the influential men in our country have been silent on the matter. The Cinematograph Act is said to have no control over the posting of posters; but the films themselves are not being scrutinised well before being allowed to be shown publicly as many contain pictures and expressions which are in many places objectionable. Hence the Act ought to be modified if required.

"The Calcutta University and educational bodies ought to interfere in this matter for the sake of the young students whose responsibility of education they have taken up."—Sudhir Bose, M.B. : *A. B. Patrika*, Aug. 15/33.

In short, the cinema shows tell upon the moral and physical health of the student community besides taxing their slender purse. They are shut up in stuffy congested atmosphere for hours and their eye-sight being put on the strain also suffers. The urge towards sensuous fantasies is the most objectionable feature.

## II—STUDENT LIFE IN PRAGUE.

In America now the richest country in the world, a great many University students *earn while they learn* as stated before. On the continent of Europe also students often manage on an allowance which may appear incredible to us. The detailed account given below by Dora Round needs no apology for insertion.

"Prague University offers to the present day student the heritage of a tradition unlike that of any other University in Europe. It is a tradition of internationalism, which was implanted in the University at its foundation, and which in spite of a chequered and sometimes stormy career, it never lost as other Universities did after the Renaissance. This internationalism, inherent in the University's tradition, has taken on a special significance to-day and gives the University a distinctive character.

"When Charles the Fourth founded the University in 1348, his intention was not merely to give a University to his own people, but to found a centre of learning such that it should attract foreign scholars as well. Learned men from many lands were invited to Prague to lecture there, and following in their wake came students not only from the neighbouring countries of Germany, Hungary and Poland, but from as far a field as France and England. The new University, the first to be founded north of the Alps and east of Paris, leapt into fame at once, and drew scholars and students from all parts, who were accorded protection and privileges by Charles.

"This tradition of internationalism is very much alive at the present day owing, among other reasons, to the multi-national population of the State, the absence of those restrictions on foreign students which exist in all the neighbouring States, and the University's prestige as the oldest in Central Europe and the chief centre for Slavonic studies. Furthermore, the authorities of to-day, as at the time of Charles, make a deliberate effort to attract students to Prague from the more distant countries in addition to those who naturally gravitate thither from the neighbouring States. There are special scholarships for foreign students



to enable them to study here, and though in some cases the scholarships are reciprocated by the countries from which the students come, in other cases—that of English students, for instance—the hospitality is all on the side of Czechoslovakia.

“Apart from these deliberate importations, the student situation in Prague is extraordinarily variegated in the matter of nationality. Of the twenty thousand<sup>a</sup> students in Prague, over sixteen thousand are Czechoslovak subjects, but not quite twelve thousand are Czech or Slovak in nationality; the remaining four thousand or so are of other nationalities, citizens of the Republic: Germans, Hungarians, Ruthenians and Poles. Among the four thousand students who are not Czechoslovak citizens the situation is still more complicated, since their nationality and their citizenship are often not identical. For instance, there are over two thousand students who are Russian, Polish, Ruthenian or Ukrainian by nationality, but only one thousand seven hundred who are citizens of Russia, Poland or Ukrainia; there are only one hundred and seventy two who are Serb, Croat or Slovene by nationality, but two hundred citizens of the Serb-Croat-Slovene State; there are over one hundred and twenty Hungarian citizens, but no foreign student of Hungarian nationality. And these discrepancies cannot be accounted for altogether by the presence of over one thousand two hundred Jewish students in Prague.

“These foreign students are naturally inclined to form distinct colonies and live chiefly in their own national groups; but the tendency of students to divide up into groups knowing nothing of each other spreads all through University life, even where it is unaffected by considerations of nationality. One reason for this is the Faculty system, which works on a different plan from that with which we are familiar in England. The University buildings are, as in London, dotted haphazard all over the town; but instead of being colleges where students of different faculties work and play and get to know each other, these buildings are grouped faculties; the Faculty of Science and Medicine on Vinohrady Hill, the Faculty of Philosophy (or most of it, for its new home is not yet completed) down by the river, and so on. There is nothing corresponding to colleges as we know them, or to the inter-faculty intercourse of college life: similarly there is none of inter-collegiate intercourse within one faculty. Each faculty remains a little isolated world by itself and University social life and athletics as we

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<sup>a</sup> This figure includes, besides the students of the four Universities—Czech, German, Russian and Ukrainian—and the Hus Theological Seminary, those of the Czech and German Polytechnics, the Academy of Arts and the Conservatoire of Music.

understand them being quite unknown, there are no opportunities for intercourse.

"These divisions are increased and aggravated by economic conditions. Large numbers of students are dependent for material support on some special body, national, political or religious. There are German hostels for German students only, Catholic hostels for Catholic students only, hostels run by the Agrarian party for students who have connections with that party only. Sometimes you get a further sub-division, such as a hostel run only for students who are German Catholics. Although a certain amount of mixing of students from different faculties necessarily takes place in these various hostels, it is less than one would expect. A hostel provides room and food, but very little beyond in the way of opportunities for social life, so that students tend rather to foregather with the little group whom they know from the lecture room than to make fresh acquaintances. Furthermore, Prague is a large city, and the buildings of the various faculties, as we have pointed out, are concentrated in separate groups at some distance from each other: students as a rule have not much to spare for tram fares, and so try to gain admittance to a hostel as near as possible to their headquarters. One of the very few satisfactory women's hostels, Budec, is situated close to the Faculty of Medicine, and a great number of the residents are medical students.

"Budec is the only really international hostel in Prague: it discriminates neither against foreigners nor against non-students. The bulk of the residents are students, because Budec has specially low rates for students whose incomes are small, and in Prague large numbers of the students have to manage on incredibly small means. This seems to result in an atmosphere of extraordinary friendliness and generosity. The top floor of Budec, where fifteen or twenty students receive free lodging as part of their State-awarded scholarship, is one of the friendliest places in the world. With the unbelievable minimum of possessions, these girls always have enough to lend or give. They wear each other's clothes, use each other's books and tea-cup; one alarm clock goes the rounds of those who are in the last extremity before an examination. If anyone has had a parcel from home or a windfall of any sort, there is a party: but there are always parties, windfall or no, and the parties are always jolly, even when the entertainment is of the most meagre. Usually there is one person towards whose room you all gravitate at tea-time because it is the jolliest there and if you have anything to contribute to the feast you bring it with you.

"Wider in scope and more deliberately international in conception is Studentsky Domov. This is a student centre which aims at supplying the opportunity for social intercourse between the students of all nationalities and faculties which University life would otherwise lack.

For this reason it differs from Akademický Dům, which with membership open to foreigners, is quite Czech in management. Studentský Domov aims at being as international as possible in both. Its membership includes twenty-seven nationalities: the five students elected to the Committee of Management are Czech, German, Slovak, Jewish and Ukrainian. The staff includes Czech, American, Russian, Swiss, German, Ukrainian and Yugoslav. Its social activities range from Czech-Hungarian acquaintance evenings to an English-speaking social club with a membership of twelve nationalities. Its canteen serves two thousand students daily with large portions of excellently cooked food at amazingly small cost, and its tea is the best in Prague.

"This canteen, together with the laundry, bathrooms and large study room are especially important in view of the poverty of a large number of the students. Forty per cent. of the students in Prague have a regular income of less than the recognised minimum of five hundred crowns (just over three pounds) a month: thirty-eight per cent. are freed from fees on account of poverty; nearly half live in rooms costing less than one hundred and fifty crowns (about eighteen shillings) a month, which means that they are badly lit, unheated, and without bathing facilities. The average student must feed and clothe himself on three hundred and fifty crowns (about two pounds four shillings) a month. Government support in maintenance and free tuition is needed and is widely given. The two and a half million crowns (fifteen thousand six hundred and twenty-five pounds) spent yearly by the Ministry of Education on scholarships to student citizens of the Republic is less than half the total sum spent on their maintenance; while the support given to hundreds of emigre students—Russian, Ukrainian and Armenian—brings the total sum spent by the Government on the maintenance of students up to one per cent. of the entire net budget (figures for 1926)."

It is interesting to compare the above figures with the cost of living in English Universities. The following figures are given by E. A. G. Caroe.

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<sup>a</sup> Another independent observer says:

"Do not despise manual labour. Two years ago I visited a large hostel in Prague (Czechoslovakia) for university students of limited financial means, built entirely by manual labour of the students themselves. When the public crowded to see this curious sight of university students employed in manual labour, a tax for the show was collected from them, and the funds for the building were thus augmented. The students there seemed to lead a very frugal life. I found several of them with no upper garment at all, and their rooms were very simple in appearance."—S. Jesudason: *The Collegian*, Feb. 24, 1930.

"Since the investigation was planned with the Cambridge estimates in mind, it may be as well to begin with a brief summary of the Cambridge figures. The estimates are given on three scales. The "lower scale" represents the irreducible minimum, and it is only by the practice of the strictest economy that a student could hope to live upon so little: the 'average' may perhaps represent what the ordinary careful student would spend; the 'higher scale' though liberal, does not allow for anything of the nature of extravagant or even luxurious, expenditure." The following table summarises the estimates of total expenditure made on these scales:

		Lower Scale.	Average.	Higher Scale.
		£. s.	£. s.	£. s.
Initial expenses ...	...	42 10	66 10	114 10
Expenses that recur annually	...	161 5	236 15	316 15
Possible Additions' (initial)	...	0 15	2 15	5 0
Possible Additions (annual)	...	35 0	50 0	76 0
Occasional expenses	...	14 0	14 0	14 0

I cannot conclude this chapter better than by quoting a few lines from Emerson's *The Man of Letters*:

"Our industrial skill, arts ministering to convenience and luxury, have made life expensive, and therefore greedy, careful, anxious; have turned the eyes downward to the earth, not upward to thought.

"So let his (scholar's) habits be formed, and all his economies heroic; no spoiled child, no drone, no epicure, but a stoic, formidable, athletic, knowing how to be poor, loving labour, and not flogging his youthful wit with tobacco and wine; treasuring his youth. I wish the youth to be an armed and complete man; no helpless angel to be slapped in the face, but a man dipped in the Styx of human experience, and made invulnerable so,—self-helping. A redeeming trait of the Sophists of Athens, Hippias and Gorgias, is that they made their own clothes and shoes. Learn to harness a horse, to row a boat, to camp down in the woods, to cook your supper. I chanced lately to be at West Point, and, after attending the examination in scientific classes, I went into the barracks. The chamber was in perfect order; the mattress on the iron-camp-bed rolled up, as if ready for removal. I asked the first Cadet, 'Who makes your bed?' 'I do.' 'Who fetches your water?' 'I do.' 'Who blacks your shoes?' 'I do.' It was so in every room.

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<sup>1</sup> Possible additions vary with the course of the study. The estimates given here are for medical students.

These are first steps to power. Learn of Samuel Johnson or David Hume, that it is a primary duty of the man of letters to secure his independence."

What is sauce for the gander is by no means sauce for the goose. Because Oxford and Cambridge have got the residential system, it does not necessarily follow it is good for India.

Some of our Rajas, Maharajas, zemindars and barristers and highly paid civil servants under the obsession of slave mentality have a sort of innate contempt for "home" education. They send their sons of immature age to Eton, Harrow and thence to Cambridge or Oxford. Tragic consequences have often followed—these lads generally go astray and cut sorry figures in after life. They slavishly ape the dark features of their aristocratic comrades but fail to imbibe the noble traits and instincts of British youth.

### III—RESIDENTIAL UNIVERSITY.

A few years ago there was a proposal for the removal of the Calcutta University to the suburbs. Below are cited a few extracts from the evidences of those who are competent to speak with authority; incidentally they point out the drawbacks inherent in the residential system (*vide Sadler Commission Report*, xii).

No wonder brought up under such easy going *milieu* they part with self-reliance and when they enter life they are unable to fight its battle because they are hopelessly incompetent to earn their livelihood.\*

"Moreover, the students whose families live in Calcutta should not be isolated from their home environments. The greatest drawback of the residential system is that the students are kept under artificial conditions, away from the every-day world, and thus cannot acquire the worldly experience which now stands them in good stead when they enter some profession.

"It is forgotten that the average income of an Indian is £1-16s. while that of an Englishman is £42 per annum. Students brought up

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\* The hostels under the Allahabad University also equally encourage luxurious habits.

in the artificial and luxurious style of the hostels cannot adapt themselves to their home life in the villages. Under the residential system the cost per student, including college fees, is not less than Rs. 35 per month,<sup>9</sup> which very few guardians can afford to spare. I have been lately reading Sir Henry Roscoe's 'Memoirs', as also his 'Life', by Sir Edward Thorpe. It is well-known that Roscoe played a leading part in founding the Universities of Manchester and Leeds, and the Universities of Birmingham, Sheffield, and Liverpool have been modelled upon these. Roscoe is full of sneers and biting sarcasm against the artificial and highly expensive life as represented in Oxford and Cambridge. The following two extracts from Thorpe's *Life of Roscoe* will make the points clear :

'It was, he said, to be 'The University of the Busy' as distinguished from the old Universities of Oxford and Cambridge—'The Universities of the Wealthy.' He pointed to the existence of the Scottish Universities, and explained what their influence had been for generations back on the middle and poorer classes of their country. Was not Lancashire, with its many populous manufacturing towns, as fully entitled to the advantages of a university as the cities over the border? The time had passed for imagining that Oxford and Cambridge, rich and powerful though they were, could do all that England legitimately required in the way of the highest academic culture.

'Moreover, it must be admitted, there is a great deal in the genius loci. That spirit had succeeded in developing John Owens foundation into a splendid institution suited to the local requirements. They in Manchester knew what the busy North wanted, but they were not quite so sure that the Dons of Oxford and Cambridge knew it as well as they themselves did. They asked to be allowed to work out their own salvation in their own way.'

"I have altogether lived seven years in England and Scotland, and lately as a delegate of the University of Calcutta in the Conferences of the Universities of the Empire I had an opportunity of visiting many British Universities. The residential system has not been popular anywhere. What has been given up as impracticable in rich England, should not be foisted upon poor India. Sir Edward Thorpe, speaking on Roscoe's efforts in localising the Owens College in the heart of Manchester says: 'It was not used for it to set itself athwart the economical condition of the community.'"—P. C. Rây, p. 330.

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<sup>9</sup> This was in 1915; at present it is Rs. 45 to Rs. 50.

"Let the Bengali boy and girl grow up at home under the refreshing 'greenth' of her waving corn-fields and crowned palm-groves, but after the village *pathshala* and village school let the growing youth stand facing the crowded vistas of civic life in the heart of humanity. Not in cloistral segregation, but in coming out of the mediæval cloister lies India's salvation, whatever may be the saving power of ruralisation to-day in the West. Not expansion, but contraction of the University and its life and span will be the immediate result of this removal to the suburbs.

"And how shall we get the active co-operation of business men on our Faculties of commerce and technology in such a scheme of segregation? or the intimate contact with corresponding firms, banks, and factories? or in those filled-up swamps or riverside flats that odour of jute or hides, of alkali and fat, which is the very breath in the countenance of industry and commerce!

"And this is not all. The metropolis of the Middle East will continue to grow her own intellectual centres in the heart of her business and her population,—her Sahitya Parishad and her Sahitya Sabha, her Ram Mohan Library, and her Chaitanya Library, . . . her Victoria Memorial, her various clubs and societies, literary, mathematical, philosophical, not to mention the halls of her three Brahmo-Samajcs, her Theosophical Society, her Ramkrishna Mission, and her Devalaya. A greater college round the colleges, these institutions in their ensemble create a social atmosphere of Western-Eastern culture, a *milieu* which socialises that culture, a living image without which the world of the school or college teaching would remain to the Indian student a distant and airy abstraction."—B. N. Seal, p. 333.

"I am not sure that a secluded university is the best type of university. It is better for students to live and study in the natural environment than to enjoy artificial peace. We do not want a 'hermit' university revelling in the peace of seclusion but a 'civic' university which is likely to develop civic consciousness and personality."—N. Sen-Gupta, p. 335.

"As regards the growth of corporate university life I do not see why it should not grow under the existing system. Simply confining all the students in a hostel should not lead to the creation of much solidarity of interest or of feeling.

"Further, such a step will deprive a very large number of our students of the opportunity of residing with their parents. We all know how very benign this parental influence is. I would, however, welcome the establishment of a large residential college in the suburbs."—N. R. Sircar, p. 337.

"I do not favour the proposal to transplant the whole University, with its colleges, to an outside site : the result would be the detachment of higher education from the general life of the province, an arrangement that would make strongly for artificiality. I prefer to contemplate colleges in numerous localities, feeling themselves in touch with local needs and aspirations. Having regard to the importance of domestic relations in the social organisation I do not think the development of a corporate university life entirely apart from these either possible or desirable."—W. C. Wordsworth, p. 339.

#### IV—THE GURUKULA.

As a protest against the expensive habits and materialistic tendencies imbibed in the modern residential hostels as described above, the *Gurukula* was established mainly through the efforts of Munshi Ram (afterwards Swami Shraddhananda).

"It is situated on the Upper Ganges, within sight of the snow-covered Himalayas and surrounded by the primeval forest. Whilst the Dayananda College aimed at preparing its pupils for the Anglo-Indian Universities, the Gurukula cut itself altogether free from that aim. Its purpose is knowledge of the Vedas and the formation of character on the basis of the Vedas. The ancient manly and life-giving culture was to be revived, the ideals of abstinence and asceticism were to be cultivated, the ancient philosophy to be rejuvenated ; early Indian history was to be studied and a new Hindu literature created, absorbing what is best in Western culture. Boys enter this school at the age of seven and stay till they are twenty-four. On entering they take a vow of poverty, chastity, and obedience for a term of sixteen years, and renew it after ten years. During the whole period they never leave the school. They may not even visit their homes unless in exceptional circumstances, and their parents may see them at most once a month. Thus the school has its own life, shut off from all outside influences ; it is a pedagogic world in which the boy passes all his days. Teachers and pupils feel themselves bound by a family tie and mutual attachment. Social consciousness and a spirit of comradeship are awakened. During the first seven school years the boys learn Sanskrit,



and the Vedas ; not till they are fourteen do they begin to come in contact with the English language, the modern sciences, and Western civilisation, and then it is through the medium of their mother tongue. Strict discipline, bodily hardihood, and the observance of daily religious ritual are intended to create a new type of manliness."

But the unfortunate thing is that the Vedas must be interpreted according to Dayananda. The Veda means knowledge and is a Divine Revelation and as such it is infallible. According to Dayananda it contains everything worth knowing ; even the most recent discoveries of modern science were anticipated in it.

Boys cut off not only from parental influence but also from the world as it is during the most teachable and impressionable period of their lives naturally find themselves hopelessly out of touch with their environments, brought up in "cloistered segregation and in this hermit University," fed on notions as delineated above. When they come out they flounder in the dark as it were. It is a case of jumping from the frying pan into the fire.

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

### DRAIN OF THE WEALTH OF THE LAND DUE TO THE ADOPTION AND APING OF EUROPEAN STANDARD OF LIVING.

"We must do our best to form a class of persons Indian in blood and colour but English in taste, in opinion and intellect."—MACAULAY (1833).

Up to this point I have confined myself to the economic drain due to Bengal's political subjection—the drain over which she has no control. But thanks to the rapidity of communication with the distant provinces of India, and Bengal's failure to adjust herself to the altered conditions brought about thereby her land has been the happy hunting ground for the hardy adventurers from those parts. Elsewhere I have shown on a rough calculation that at least Rs. 120 crores are annually drained out of Bengal by the non-Bengalis (Vol. I, p. 440).

Nor is this all. Of all the peoples of India the Bengali has been the most imitative. As far as the aping and adoption of the customs and costumes of the dominant race are concerned the Bengali can give points to his fellow-countrymen in the sister provinces. When the first Bengali was called to the bar and began his practice at the Calcutta High Court he fixed his residence in the Chowringhee quarter (*i.e.* "the West End"), furnished his drawing room à l'*Européenne*, and adopted the dress and the manners of his English master to a nicety. His successors imitated his example with alacrity, nay improved upon it. What the High Court Bar does to-day, the whole of educated Bengal does tomorrow. It is as much looked up to as Paris was by the fashionable world in the time of Charles II and James II.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Regarding this sort of slavish imitation of fashion compare : "Her (France's) authority was supreme in all matter of good breeding, from a duel to minuet. She determined how a gentleman's coat must be cut, how long his peruke must be, whether his heels must be high or low, and whether the lace on his hat must be broad or narrow.

## I—PERILS IN A CUP OF TEA.

The result has been disastrous from the economic point of view. The bar-library is the emporium of fashion, and it is always found that fashion filters down from the more "refined" to the less "refined" and ultimately to the commoners. The masses eagerly follow in the wake of the *bhadralogs*. Bengal is a home of tobacco, and some of its best qualities are extensively cultivated in Rungpur and Cooch Behar. Imported cigarettes of foreign manufacture are, however, flooding the market and the demand for these is going up by leaps and bounds. The beggar in the streets and the peasant ploughing his field will disdain to smoke from the *hooka*. The indigenous tobacco is being rapidly supplanted. Following in the wake of cigar-smoking another vicious habit has begun to permeate not only the upper educated classes but also the lower orders and threatens to spread even among the masses. Tea drinking was almost unknown in Bengal. But Lord Curzon, the high priest of imperialism and exploitation, levied a tea-cess, the proceeds of which were made over to the European Tea Association. Being amply provided with funds it commenced its propaganda operations by opening tea-shops in all the prominent places in the Indian quarters of Calcutta and distributing cups of tea and also pice-packets gratis. The "Educated" Bengali ever on the alert for imitating European ways, eagerly swallowed the bait. He has already become a confirmed tea-drinker and the habit is spreading like wild fire among the coolies, carters and labourers in general. The Tea Association, having captured Calcutta and emboldened by its phenomenal success, has begun propaganda on a large scale in the Provincial towns and big railway terminals with immense success. A cup of tea—"the cup that cheers,

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. . . At several courts princes and nobles spoke it [French] more accurately and politely than their mother tongue. . . . Great masters of our language, in their most dignified compositions, affected to use French words, when English words, quite as expressive and sonorous, were at hand".—Macaulay: *History of England*.

but not inebriates"—may be refreshing in cold countries but there is absolutely no need for it in warm climates. A European, when he drinks tea has at any rate substantial food in his stomach. The ill-paid and badly nourished clerk in Calcutta or Bombay feels fatigue after a couple of hours' hard work at the desk and drinks a cup of tea. He, momentarily, feels refreshed and goes on with his drudgery and again follows with another cup and in this way he often drinks half-a-dozen cups. He urges in support of this habit that it kills appetite and therefore he has no need for nourishing food. I am as much concerned here with the medical or physiological aspects of the question as with its economic bearing ; 96 per cent. of the tea produced in Bengal comes from the European gardens and barely 4 per cent. from the Indian. The tea-drinking habit is spreading fast among the masses and, if it goes on at this rate, in the course of the next 25 years the population of Bengal being taken at 50 millions, the European planters may safely count upon a yearly sale of 50 millions rupees worth of tea in Bengal alone. One rupee per head per annum is only a moderate estimate and represents so much wealth drained out of the land. Some deductions however, should be made from the actual drain involved in the shape of the wages of the miserably-paid coolies who are again non-Bengalis. Then again lying propaganda on an extensive scale is resorted to in railway platforms and other public places to the effect that tea is preventive of malaria.

It is necessary to quote here expert medical opinion on the deleterious effects of tea and coffee drinking.

"In Bengal, from time immemorial, everyman, rich or poor, used to take his morning meal of *Gur-Chhola* (molasses and gram) or *Ada-Chhola* (ginger and gram) or *Chhola* and *Muri* (fried rice and gram) or *phen-bhat* (rice with the water after boiling) and milk, as the case may be, and as dietetic prescriptions they can hardly be improved upon either in general balance or in vitamin content. The rich used to supplement such dietary by the addition of butter and sugar candy and occasionally *Chhana* (curded milk), making an almost ideal meal.

"Nearly 30 years ago, the Indian Tea Association started, in the interests of trade, an intensive campaign, for the introduction of tea into India, as a dietary of the people. As the vast majority of Indians

are too poor to afford both their customary food and tea it meant the substitution of their food by tea altogether. While the association moved heaven and earth in pursuit of their sordid interest to induce the people to fall off from their immemorial custom, not a little finger was raised, even by the Sanitary Department, to warn the unsuspecting people, that a decoction of tea, but for the presence of traces of milk of doubtful quality, possesses no dietetic value whatsoever. 'This selfish onslaught of the Indian Tea Association on the citadel of custom has continued, without let or hindrance, from any quarter, for thirty solid years, with the result that the Association have succeeded in their none too praiseworthy attempt, to strangle the salutary and universal dietetic custom of the country and undermine the health of a guileless people.'—N. R. Sen Gupta, M.D.

"Tea and coffee stimulate the heart and nervous system . . . . . Even properly made tea, if taken in large quantities (and in some individuals in quite small amounts), may lead to indigestion, general nervousness, palpitation, giddiness, and insomnia. It necessarily does harm if taken instead of food, or to mask the effects of fatigue, and so enable a man to go on working when his brain really needs rest."—J. Walter Carr, M.D., F.R.C.S., London.

Continual tea-drinking is pernicious ; the desire for alcohol is a natural craving, and tobacco is a mild and sometimes helpful sedative, according to Dr. W. E. Dixon, of Cambridge, who addressed the British Medical Association at Winnipeg recently on "Drug Addiction." His views on the comparative values of the stimulants may be summarised as follows :

"One of the causes leading to neurosis, he said, was the universal and regular consumption of caffeine, the commonest, though it might be the least harmful, of drug addictions.

"Tea and coffee were the chief caffeine beverages. One good cup of tea usually contained more than a grain of caffeine, so that the average tea drinker consumed 5 to 8 grains of caffeine daily, a not inconsiderable amount.

"The continual use of caffeine produced mental irritability and excitability and sometimes dizziness and digestive troubles, while reflexes were always exaggerated. All these effects could be produced by 6 to 7 grains daily.

"The introduction of tea throughout the country of late years has caused so much damage to the digestive power of the people of our upper and middle classes, that tea-dyspepsia has become quite an endemic disease in our cities and towns. If tea be taken in a concentrated form like soup, containing a large amount of tannin and made

rich with plenty of milk, and sugar in five or six large cupfuls a day, it produces after a time acidity, wind colic and costiveness. Sleeplessness and loss of appetite follow. At last some dilation of the stomach and palpitation of the heart."

Dr. John Fisher writes that caffeine, the active principle of tea, has a "cumulative effect and acts somewhat similarly to cocaine stimulating at first, but, like other drugs with an inevitable and depressing reaction, demanding further stimulants, and leaving the consumer worse than he was before. In this way, tea is the cause of much depression, discontent, unrest and craving for excitement. It also creates indigestion, insomnia, anæmia, constipation, and often leads up to alcohol drug-taking, and even insanity. Coffee is as bad; cocoa not much better."

Dr. J. Batty Tuke says: "It is an open question whether the whisky bottle, or the teapot exercises the most baneful influence."

## II—THE AUTOMOBILES.

Motor cars, again, are rapidly coming into vogue, so much so that if one wishes to be regarded as somebody and respectable he must possess one or more. A lawyer or a medical man who would start in his career must have a motor-car, otherwise his clients or his patients will fight shy of him. (Cf. Vol. I. p. 17).

Not only the Zemindar, over head and ears in debt, but even the professor drawing rupees five hundred per month or less must indulge in this luxury. The importers of motors and automobiles are plying a roaring trade. In America it is true that every fifth or third man has a car, but then in the case of the Americans time is money. Moreover, every constituent part of it is made in America. The petrol consumed is pumped out of her own wells or in wells controlled by her capitalists. The labour is American. Not only every farthing the manufacturer spends remains in the land but he often earns fabulous wealth by sending his surplus produce into other lands. The same remarks apply to England. If America has her Ford, England has her Morris. If America has her oil-king Rockefeller, England has her oil-fields in Assam, Burma and the Persian Coast. England in addition has almost the monopoly of the India-rubber. But when the Indian buys and uses a motor car, all the money he spends for it goes out of his land,

including the daily expenses involved in the consumption of the petrol. I can well understand the supreme need of the European or Marwari businessman using a car, for he has often to traverse 25, 50 or it may be a 100 miles a day. The jute broker is now at Kakinara or Shamnagar and then off to Budge-Budge. But the Bengali judge or lawyer who often lives within a radius of a mile or two of the High Court cannot urge that a motor car is a necessity to him. If he drove in a carriage it would take barely 10 to 15 minutes to reach his destination that he could reach in a motor car in 3 to 5 minutes. From ten in the morning till half past five in the afternoon his car stays in the garage. The saving of a few minutes' time makes no material difference. But he sets a pernicious example to his less-favoured brethren who, to keep up appearances, often live beyond their means and run into debt.

Motor buses have begun to ply in the streets of Calcutta. They are also flooding the district towns and the interior of the country where there is not even a properly metalled road.

The district board roads are *kutchha* (non-metalled) and the roads in the district towns are mere apologies for *pucca* (metalled) roads. During the dry season the clouds of dust constantly kicked up by motor buses almost suffocate the passers-by, as also the permanent residents of these towns. From early morning till 10 o'clock at night people must submit martyr-like to this nuisance, which also causes injury to the pulmonary organs.

There is a saying in Bengali that the very sight of a horse in harness makes one lame. The poor clerk, who drudges like a galley-slave and can barely make two ends meet, refuses to walk now-a-days from Shambazar to the Secretariat. As soon as he gets to the nearest street-corner he jumps into the bus and pays 12. 3p. as fare. Even on his return journey in the evening when he is in no hurry and can afford to walk back leisurely he gladly spends an additional anna. When it is borne in mind that this ill-paid quill-driver lives in dingy ill-ventilated rooms, and his wife and children suffer from malnutrition, it needs no further comments to explain what an

indulgence this modern luxury really comes to. But the mischief does not end here. Formerly it was quite the custom for ordinary village folks, including the gentry, to walk on foot<sup>2</sup> four to six miles at a stretch, but as motor-buses are now piercing and tapping the length and breadth of Bengal, even the peasants, who in most parts of Bengal sit idle for nine months in the year and whose sole subsistence depends upon the *aman* rice crop, refuse to walk much.

They go in also for every article of luxury but not of utility. If there is a bumper crop with good price ruling in the market, they get cash and recklessly squander it on bicycles, gramophones, handkerchief of imported artificial silk, on gaudy tinsel and gewgaws. The peasant, however grown-up he may be, behaves like a child when these fancy articles catch his sight. By July and August, when his resources begin to get exhausted his granary becomes empty. Everything the peasant buys is in exchange for the produce of the land; he has no subsidiary occupation for the idle months and as his stock of food grains barely lasts for 3 months he borrows at exorbitant rates of interests from his *mahajan* (money lender) in order to tide over the rest of the year. His bicycles, gramophones and harmoniums find their way to the pawn-brokers. Nor is this all. While he goes in for these articles of luxury, his cattle are reduced to skeletons for want of fodder, his

<sup>2</sup> Cf. "The civilised man built a coach but forgot the use of limbs."  
—Emerson.

Cf. also: "We have to realize that we can never remain really well unless we take regular and sufficient outdoor exercise.

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"Undoubtedly one of the most difficult problems of modern life in large cities is how to get enough exercise. First of all we must realize that a certain amount of daily exercise is essential.

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"For the vast majority walking is the only form of daily exercise available.

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"Modern facilities for rapid transit by tubes, motors, etc., have many compensatory drawbacks, especially if they induce people to give up walking."—J. Walter Carr, M.D.



children get emaciated as they are fed mainly on gruel, cow's milk even in small doses seldom being a part of their dietary. Marshall notices this sort of imitativeness among the English labourers and the price they have to pay for appearing as better folks. It is a tragedy—this contact of a primitive people with simple habits with highly progressive and advanced races.

The Maori of New Zealand is disappearing off the earth because he has been brought all of a sudden into close touch with an environment to which he cannot adapt himself. The middle classes in Bengal though they may be "cultured" have hopelessly failed to keep abreast of the mercantile or industrial developments ; their average income is barely one-thirtieth of that of an American or Englishman of the same social rank, and when they feverishly rush after the amenities of modern civilized life they court their doom.<sup>3</sup>

They have acquired a morbid craze for the absorption of European "civilization" but are as helpless as the Zulu or the Red Indian, or the Santhal as far as the manufacture of finished goods out of their own abundant supply of raw materials is concerned. The peasantry, imitating their betters, bring ruin and starvation on their families. Even in industrially advanced England the working classes under the spell of democracy have caught the rage for things that are "pure nonsense" and are fast losing the sense of "responsibility and thrift." They too are mad after imitating their betters and enjoying the good things of life.

"The demand for prime necessities such as food and normal clothing has decreased, in favour of things to satisfy desires that are obviously of secondary importance, even pure nonsense. Essentials are being systematically relegated to the back-ground, while everything for the leisure hours is much in demand. Luxury, or at any rate imitation luxury, is popular—everyone must have it.

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<sup>3</sup> Of the annual imports of over Rs. 230 crores the following items contribute mostly to drain away our wealth ; cotton-goods, 60 to 65 crores ; artificial silk, 4 crores ; sugar, 18 crores ; metals and their manufactures, 23 crores ; motor vehicles, 5 crores ; liquor, 3 crores ; cigarettes, 2 crores. During the last 4 or 5 years of slump, the imports have considerably decreased.

"Meanwhile, a host of new expenses figure in every one's budget, expenses suggested by industries which seem almost to have sprung out of the blue, for twenty years ago they did not even exist. The world's consumption is now largely made up of an endless demand for automobiles, gramophones, radios, electrical gadgets, telephones, cinematographs, cameras, etc. This is evidently one by-product of the spread of democracy among the masses, who, weary of restraint, are at last insisting on having their share in the good things of life. By diminishing the general sense of responsibility and thrift, and by suddenly revealing the profound instability of our age, the War hastened this evolution of humanity towards immediate gratification. Asia and Africa are rapidly following in the wake of America and Europe in this respect."—Andre Siegfried: *England's Crisis*. pp. 95-96.

It has now become customary for the High Court British Judges and successful barristers to avail themselves of the long vacation extending from the last week of September to the middle of November to proceed home. Our Bengali judges and lions of the bar must follow suit and go 'home'. An Englishman when he secures a berth in the Imperial Mail as also in the P. and O. knows full well that the money he spends on this account returns to him or his own country as the shareholders of the railway and steamer companies are British; but the Bengali forgets that every farthing he spends this way goes out of his pocket and his own land. There are scores of salubrious retreats in India where one could easily recuperate his health. But the Bengali judge or barrister or the Civilian must imitate his betters and fulfil the prophecy of Macaulay uttered a century ago and which I have quoted at the top of this chapter. While they squander money like water on such occasions they are known to show a long and weary face when approached for a donation, say for purposes of education. They coolly forget that they owe any obligation to the land of their birth. They evidently think that they have been sent to this world to be the chosen instruments for the draining away of the wealth of the country and be active helpers of exploitation. The judge, the practising lawyer, the doctor, the school master, the clerk constituting the educated classes—one and all—are parasites, living ultimately on the produce of the land. None of them creates wealth. They have been quick to mimic the

externals of European life but the energy, pluck, indomitable perseverance, punctuality and method—qualities which really count and go to the making of a nation they are hopelessly deficient in. All the same, in social matters they are as far behind as their less favoured brethren and strictly conform to the orthodox style, and hesitate to deviate an inch from the age-long customs.<sup>4</sup>

I cannot conclude better than with the thoughtful remarks of a Bengali writer :

"This approximation to the European style of living can hardly be called 'elevation'. In many, I may say most, respects, the change is decidedly for the worse. In a climate where minimum of clothing conformably to the indigenous standard of decency is conducive to health for the greater portion of the year, covering oneself up from head to foot after the European style cannot but be prejudicial to health. The same remark applied generally to the change of taste in regard to eating, drinking and smoking, especially in regard to the alarming spread of tea-drinking and of cigarette smoking.

"But whether 'elevation' or not, whether for good or for bad, the approximation of the standard of living of one of the poorest communities of the world to that of one of the richest is suicidal. True, a very small section of our community composed of some artisans, state servants, lawyers etc. have more money than before. But they too are generally impoverished.

"Impoverishment is a comparative term. If one having comparatively more money than before has yet more wants, he is certainly poorer. I do not think I am exaggerating when I say that the great majority of our middle class have been impoverished in this sense. The candle burns at both ends. Their resources are exhausted on the one hand by the inordinate enhancement of the prices of indigenous necessities, and on the other by the so called elevation of the standard of living which is enlarging their wants. Even incomes which formerly would have been regarded as opulence are now hardly deemed to be bare competence. While milk and the various preparations of milk which form our principal articles of nutrition suited to the climate have become so very dear that the great majority of our middle class cannot afford to get them in sufficient quantity for bare subsistence, they have to spend comparatively large sums upon the gratification of the new

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. "The growth of European habits has been remarkably accelerated among these [Red] Indians by the mixed race which has sprung up."—De Toqueville: *Democracy in America*, Vol. I. p. 411.

tastes which have sprung up for clothing, shoes, socks etc., and for amusements and games, such as theatrical performances, circuses, cinemas, billiards, football, tennis etc., which have superseded the much less expensive indigenous amusements and games. For, the average man blindly follows the prevailing fashion and with him show counts for more than substance, and the ornamental prevails over the useful."

—P. N. Bose : *Swaraj—Cultural and Political*, pp. 123-125.

"In that part of India", the Commons' Committee [1832] asked the witness, Holt Mackenzie, "where the greatest number of British residents are found, has there been any increase among the natives in the indulgence of English tastes, fashions, and habits?"

"Judging from Calcutta", replied Holt Mackenzie, "there has been, I think, a marked tendency among the natives to indulge in English luxuries; they have well-furnished houses, many wear watches, they are fond of carriages, and are understood to drink wines."

"A smile of grim satisfaction must have overspread the faces of the grave and reverend commoners of England on obtaining this significant evidence of the spread of Western civilization in India!"<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> R. C. Dutt : *Economic History of British India*.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### SCIENTIFIC SPECIALIZATION AND NARROW OUTLOOK— FAILURE IN LIFE.

"The man of science is fond of glory and vain  
An eye well practised in nature but a spirit bounded and poor."

—TENNYSON.

Nothing like leather cries the shoemaker. When Li Hung Chang made a tour of Europe he was asked if the European cities were not cleaner and better laid out than, say, Peking. The Chinese statesman looked about and replied that might be so but he missed very much the unsavoury odours of his native city. There is a Bengali story which relates how a fishwoman was once caught hold of and treated sumptuously and allowed to sleep in a soft bed strewn with roses. She felt uneasy because of the absence of the fishy atmosphere which she was used to inhale.<sup>1</sup>

These tales prove how much man is the slave of habit, and habit soon grows to be a second nature. To the bacteriologist plodding over his microscope and ultramicroscope intent on discovering new bacilli and microbes, and to the astronomer busy with his monster telescope sweeping the firmament night after night ever on the alert for the discovery of a new heavenly body there is again no other enjoyment in life.

In these days when intense specialization is the order of the day it is necessary to call a halt and inquire into its effect in the mind of the specialist. Forty-four years ago Oliver Wendell Holmes in his inimitable way thus put forth the limitations of the man who devotes himself to one branch of study only to the exclusion of others :

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. "When Louis Pasteur as a lad of fifteen was sent to Paris for education he got home-sick and longed to be back to his parents. Few people would choose to live near a tan-yard, but to Louis all the scents and sights of Paris could not make up for the lack of its familiar odour. 'If I could only get a whiff of the tannery yard, I feel I should be cured.'"

"We have only to look over the lists of the faculties and teachers of our Universities to see the sub-division of labour carried out as never before. The movement is irresistible, it brings with it exactness, exhaustive knowledge, a narrow but complete self-satisfaction, with such accompanying faults as pedantry, triviality, and the kind of partial blindness which belongs to intellectual myopia. The specialist is idealized almost into sublimity in Browning's 'Burial of the Grammarian'. We never need fear that he will undervalue himself. To be the supreme authority on anything is a satisfaction to self-love next door to the precious delusions of dementia. I have never pictured a character more contented with himself than the 'Scarabee' of this story". Off his own branch, the specialist is often as helpless and ignorant as a new born babe. Hence the necessity for a broad culture and wide outlook. As Lord Acton points out:

"Apart from what is technical, method is only the reduplication of common sense, and is best acquired by observing its use by ablest man in every variety of intellectual employment. Bentham acknowledged that he learned less from his own profession than from writers like Linnaeus and Cullen; and Brougham advised the student of law to begin with Dante. Liebig described his organic chemistry as an application of ideas found in Mill's Logic, and a distinguished physician, not to be named lest he should overhear me, read three books to enlarge his medical mind; and they were Gibbon, Grote and Mill. He goes on to say, 'An educated man cannot become so on one study alone, but must be brought under the influence of natural, civil, and moral modes of thoughts.'

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Faraday declares that "in knowledge, that man only is to be condemned and despised who is not in a state of transition," *i.e.* who is hide-bound by conventionalities and a slave to tradi-

tion and stereotyped mode of thought and cannot keep pace with the time-spirit.<sup>2</sup>

It is therefore necessary that the man of science should widen his outlook and range of knowledge by a study of subjects other than his own. That exclusive attention to one branch and being immersed in it atrophies and stunts the growth and development of other faculties is proved in the case of Darwin.

In his *Autobiography* he says : "I have said that in one respect my mind has changed during the last twenty or thirty years. Up to the age of thirty, or beyond it, poetry of many kinds, such as the works of Milton, Gray, Byron, Wordsworth, Coleridge and Shelly, gave me great pleasure, and even as a schoolboy I took intense delight in Shakespeare, especially in the historical plays. I have also said that formerly pictures gave me considerable, and music very great delight. But now for many years I cannot endure to read a line of poetry. I have tried lately to read Shakespeare, and found it so intolerably dull that it nauseated me. I have also almost lost my taste for pictures or music. . . . . This envious and lamentable loss of the higher aesthetic tastes is all the odder, as books on history, biographies and travels . . . and essays on all sorts of subjects interest me as much as ever they did. My mind seems to have become a kind of machine for grinding general laws out of large collections of facts, but why this should have caused the atrophy of that part of the brain alone, on which the higher tastes depend, I cannot conceive . . . The loss of these tastes is a loss of happiness, and may possibly be injurious to the intellect, and more probably to the moral character, by enfeebling the emotional part of our nature."

A writer who has evidently thought much on the subject has some apposite observations to make :

"It is now six years that, addressing the Physiological Section of the British Association for the Advancement of Science which met at Glasgow in 1928, the president of the

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<sup>2</sup> The Mussolini of to-day is an entirely different man from the Mussolini of the March on Rome. "He has lost his belief in the omnipotence of formulas and dogmas. Then he believed more in miracles, now he relies more on hard work. Then he had the conviction that he had the power to sweep away all obstacles merely by telepathy; now he knows that detail work is the secret of the statesman's greatness."—Lengyel : *Hitler*, p. 228.

section, Professor C. A. Lovatt Evans, observed: "The rapidly accumulating wealth of detailed knowledge and of special technique demands an increased specialization unless there is a periodic intellectual stock-taking there must inevitably be a loss of perspective and of grasp of great general principles. But how can this stock-taking be done? Can team work ever reach the harmony of action which distinguishes the individual? How will scientific literature develop?" Referring then to the observed tendency of research-workers to confine themselves increasingly to narrower and still narrower fields within the same division or subdivision of a subject, he asked: "How will the results of their special investigation be brought to common ground if no great unifying principles come to light? Can we expect that such unifying principles will appear? If they do not, will the progress of science be brought to an end by the accumulation of its own products?"

"Though the remarks quoted above were made with special reference to the Physical Sciences, they apply with equal force to the other departments of study; and in noticing these remarks at that time, the writer of this article was led to observe that the division of labour for purposes of intensive study has proceeded in every department of scientific inquiry (History, Archæology, Politics, Economics, Sociology, Literature, etc.), in geometrical progression, with the result that the interest of each individual research worker is being cribbed, cabined and confined within progressively narrowing ranges till his very capacity for wider interests appears to be seriously in danger of being crippled, if not destroyed altogether. This is the penalty he has to pay for specialisation." And he pointed out that this new school of research-workers undoubtedly suffered in point of general culture; and, lacking general education and breadth of outlook themselves, were (when they were installed in teaching posts) naturally quite unable to impart this general education and breadth of outlook ("perspective" as Professor Lovatt Evans called it) to their students, so that in the result the newer generation of students (very few of whom naturally are cut out for and expected and still less required to be research-



workers) are seen to exhibit less and less of those essentials of the citizens of a civic commonwealth ; and he appealed for steps to be devised, before the dangerous possibilities of the situation had time to develop to extremities, to arrest its further progress in that direction.

"The educational outlook at the present moment of those in charge of teaching work in all parts of the world where there is any kind of education organised on modern lines is dominated by what has been aptly designated by Professor Lovatt Evans as the 'idolization of research'. Teaching appointments of every kind all over the world are thus coming to be filled increasingly as a rule by men very deeply conversant with some one or other restricted patch of knowledge, but who in almost in the same proportion in which they are so conversant are at the same time lacking in adequate apprehension of the wider interests which alone can give significance to the fragments which occupy and absorb them.

"I shall close the article by circularising a piece of news which will connect its closing topically with its beginning. The Association of German Men of Science and Physicians, it has been recently announced, has reorganised itself with a view 'to opposing the splitting up of medicine and the natural sciences into various specialities.' The officers of the society will not organise any professional meetings for the discussion of topics pertaining to a single branch of science or medicine, and it is expressly stated in the programme that 'There is no place in the association for those persons who have no interest in anything outside their own speciality.'"<sup>3</sup>

The writer naturally laments that the innate taste and curiosity of students have been numbed and frosted by early specialisation.

I have already given several instances to prove that young-men with their heads crammed with mere book-learning fail hopelessly in work-a-day life and in business. Dr. E. H.

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<sup>3</sup> *Cultivated Ignorance* by Nagendranath Ghosh : *India and the World*, Nov., 1934.

Hankin in his *Mental Limilation of the Expert* has treated the subject exhaustively. I conclude this chapter with a few excerpts from it :

"Many instances have been adduced of highly developed business ability in badly educated persons and we have even found reasons for suspecting that education, despite its advantages in other respects, checks the development of the business instinct.

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"Cecil Rhodes once said that college dons are babes in financial matters."

Stephen Leacock thus sums up his experience as a school-master in Canada : "I have noted that of my pupils those who seemed the laziest and the least enamoured of books are now rising to eminence at the bar, in business, and in public-life, the really promising boys who took all the prizes are now able with difficulty to earn the wages of a clerk in a summer hotel or a deck hand in a canal boat."

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"An acquaintance who had been to a certain school told me it was notorious that education there was so good that its boys were constantly getting scholarships and exhibitions at the universities. But it was also notorious that one never seemed to hear of them afterwards.

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"The Indian student, who arouses the despair of his school-master by learning a text-book by heart, without having properly assimilated its contents, is by no means distinguished for general knowledge."

"Mr. L. K. Ananta Krishna, Superintendent of the Ethnographical Survey of Cochin State in Southern India, tells me that the Mahomedans in Cochin are known as 'Moplahs.' They originated from the union of Arab immigrants with women of the soil. Their mother tongue is Malayalam. Their education is next to nothing. They can read Arabic, but there are no scholars among them. They know enough arithmetic to

calculate interest. They are good businessmen. The trade in hides is mostly in their hands. They predominate in both wholesale and retail manufactured commodities, paper, timber and other local products. Mr. Ananta Krishna tells me that, in Southern India educated Hindus may be found in retail but never in wholesale trade."

My frequent visits to Madras and Bangalore have enabled me to verify the above statement of Mr. Ananta Krishna. Sir Ismail Sait of Bangalore who began life as a pedlar, rose to be a millionaire by his business capacity. The Multanis, Memons of Cutch and Boras and Khojahs of the Moslem community, though not "learned", have a monopoly of some of the big businesses.

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## CHAPTER XX.

### OLD AGE—HOW TO BATTLE AGAINST IT.

"*Activity alone is life*"—COUNT RUMFORD (Benjamin Thompson).

I once asked a well known chemist in London why it is that chemists of eminence have generally been long-lived ; one should have rather feared that working for hours on end "in the stinks" and sometimes inhaling malodorous and obnoxious gases and fumes, they would just be the people whose duration of life might be shorter than that of the average span.

The explanation I was given at once struck me. The researcher in the laboratory pursues his aim irrespective of immediate material gains. The work itself is his pleasure—he is keen after the results and watches not only with breathless interest but also keen enjoyment every step leading to the realisation of his aim. The explanation has also been given by Dr. Hollander in a book just published—*Old Age Deferred* (1933) :

"A philosophical mind, interested in the study of nature and search after truth, besides affording the purest of human enjoyments, appears to have a tendency to promote longevity. Plato was 81, Newton 85, Kant 80, Galileo 78, Buffon 81, Herschell 34, Franklin 84 and Herbert Spencer, though an invalid, died in harness at 83. Darwin, too, completed one of his greatest works towards the close of his life.

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"An exception to the weakest side of longevity are men of science, who owing to their minds being centred on the problems in the solution of which disturbing influences are deliberately set aside, have a high average of longevity. They are to a large extent free from the baleful emotivity which is a frequent accompaniment of creative genius. They are not the slaves of passions which wear out the body."

I have known, on the other hand, accountant generals, drawing princely salary, consuming midnight oil over figures mounting up to several digits as the financial year draws to a close. Most of them have been shortlived and I have never envied their lot, inspite of the substantial emoluments which they enjoy. Highly placed Government officers, more often than not are so many drudges or hacks of routine ; they are no better than soulless machines toiling like galley slaves.

#### I—SENILE MENTAL CHANGES.

The authority quoted above thus summarises the drawbacks incidental to old age.

“Long before any physical signs of old age appear, mental changes may have occurred quite imperceptibly. A man, hitherto full of energy, enthusiasm, and cheerfulness, discovers that the pleasures of life no longer offer the same enjoyment to him ; that the society of young men is apt to bore ; that they belong to a new generation, whose interests and enjoyments are not his own. His views, political, social, or scientific, for which he has hitherto fought with all his energy, become moderated. Altogether, he grows more serious and sedate. The passions have lost their fervour, the intoxication of youth is gone, and he falsely prides himself on his self-control.

\* \* \* \* \*

“Robbed of every other interest in life, they never think beyond their personal affairs.

\* \* \* \* \*

“There is no longer the same intuition and inspiration and former concentration.

“Youth is defiant, grapples with life, laughs at difficulties and discomforts, and enjoys danger for the thrill of the thing. As we grow old, we change, lose the zest and the capacity to endure hardships. We lose the precious gift of curiosity ; become bored easily, and finally accept comfortableness as a consolation for what we have missed. There is loss of initiative in the old man, enthusiasm wanes, and the *tedium vitae* makes him feel that the game is not worth the candle.”

Somehow or other I find that though my hair is turning gray and the infirmities of age are slowly creeping on, my energy and enthusiasm and even capacity for work are as great as ever. In fact, I now easily realise the complaint of Plotinus to the effect that the creator made a mistake in imprisoning the human soul with its infinite aspirations in a fragile and decaying cage. Ever since taking my B.Sc. degree, *i.e.* exactly half a century ago, I have been a devoted student of my favourite subject; and if for a single day I have to be absent from my laboratory, I grieve like Titus: "Oh, friends! Today I have lost a day."

A French chemist, evidently younger than myself, expresses his exultation over the fact that for the last 35 years he has been unremittingly pursuing his favourite subject, *viz.* the fluorination of organic compounds.<sup>1</sup> Recently a colleague and ex-pupil of mine and of Prof. Urbain (of the Sorbonne, Paris), Dr. P. B. Sarkar, has hit upon a process of extending and amplifying this work, but he had to give it up as he is busy with researches pertaining to his own special line. I have, however, in collaboration with a junior pupil of mine taken it up as I find it of supreme interest. Another branch of investigation emanating from the suggestive and ingenious brain of Dr. Sarkar has simply fascinated me. I have myself been pursuing my work on the varying valency of platinum, gold, and iridium with unabated zeal. I need scarcely add

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<sup>1</sup> In course of a communication made to the *Congrès des Sciences* held in Brussels, July, 1930, F. Swarts, Professors at the University of Gand said:

"At the time when I was initiated in chemistry, the chemistry of organic fluorine compounds was rarely touched upon.

"An almost virgin field was opened to us—as fluorine was regarded markedly different in its behaviour from the other halogens.

"Once entered into the field (since 1895) we have rarely been able to come out of it up till now. The harvest was very much rich at least as it appears to us".

Cf. P. C. Rây: *Fluorination of Organic Compounds*, P. B. Sarkar and A. Rây: *Nature*, Nov. 11, 1933, p. 749; *Isomorphism and Chemical Constitution*, *ibid.*, April 28, 1934; *A New Method of Fluorination of Organic Compounds*, *ibid.*, July 29, 1933.

here that my investigations on the nitrites of mercury and nitrites in general kept me fully engaged for quarter of a century and more.

I do not for a moment allow myself to be regarded as a back number or a spent force, but try to keep abreast of the latest advances in my science.

Here for a moment, let me advert to the tragedy of long life. The German chemist-philosopher, Ostwald, somewhere says that longevity specially in the case of scientific men has often a serious drawback; youngmen coming to the fore subvert long-accepted theories propounded by them. Anent this point the considered opinion of one of the greatest of living authorities on organic chemistry may be quoted here:

"I feel that it is not important for the scientist whether his own theory proves the right one in the end. Our experiments are not carried out to decide whether we are right, not to prove that we are right, but to gain new knowledge. It is for knowledge's sake that we plow and sow. It is not inglorious at all to have erred in theories and hypotheses. Our hypotheses are intended for the present rather than for the future. They are indispensable for us in the explanation of the secured facts, to enliven and to mobilize them and above all, to blaze a trail into unknown regions towards new discoveries."—Richard Willstätter in The Willard Gibbs Medal Address for 1933.

The great Swedish chemist, Berzelius, for three decades the autocrat and law-giver in the chemical world, had the misfortune to see his pet electro-chemical theories knocked on the head by two young chemists, Gerhardt and Laurent. "Damn the French chemists", exclaimed he in disgust. When the young van't Hoff, 22 years old, propounded his now famous theory of the arrangement of atoms in space, the old veteran German chemist Kolbe thus wrote a scathing criticism:

"A Dr. van't Hoff"—so runs the diatribe—"of the Veterinary College, Utrecht (he had in the meantime been appointed to an assistantship at this place) appears to have no taste for exact chemical

research. He finds it a less arduous task to mount his Pegasus (evidently borrowed from the Veterinary College) and to soar to his chemical Parnassus, there to reveal in his *La Chimie dans l'espace* how he finds the atoms situated in the world's space.

"His hallucinations met with but little encouragement from the prosaic chemical public. Dr. F. Hermann, assistant at the Agricultural Institute of Heidelberg, therefore undertook to give them further publicity by means of a German edition. . . . It is not possible, even cursorily, to criticise this paper, since its fanciful nonsense carefully avoids any basis of fact, and is quite unintelligible to the calm investigator. . . ."

"Kolbe goes on to deplore the times. To think that an unknown chemist should be given a ready ear when he talks of the most difficult of problems, and particularly when he treats them with such perfect assurance!

"If I quote Kolbe's criticism at some length it is only to show—for the tenth time, no doubt—how very often some of the most powerful intellects of the day completely misunderstand the germ of a new idea. And Kolbe was a most representative scientist of his time. Yet to-day there is not an elementary book in organic or physical chemistry but devotes no inconsiderable portion of its text to stereochemistry!"—Benjamin Harrow.

When Thomas Young began to write on physical optics, the undulatory theory of light had made little headway against its rival, the emission theory, owing to the powerful name of Newton connected with it. The vital importance of Young's contributions was not understood and he received a castigation at the hands of Henry Brougham in the *Edinburgh Review* (1803). The critic could find in them "nothing which deserves the name either of experiment or discovery," considered them "destitute of every species of merit," and admonished the Royal Society for printing such "paltry and unsubstantial papers."

Newlands, an Englishman, had anticipated the Periodic Law of Mendeleëf. "In a paper read before the English Chemical Society in 1866, Newlands showed that the elements could be arranged in groups of eight along horizontal lines in such a way that elements in the vertical columns would be those with similar properties. The law of Octaves was given to this grouping of eights. The reception of the theory by Newlands'



fellow-chemists was anything but encouraging. One ostentatious busybody wished to know whether Newlands had tried to arrange the elements according to their initial letters! Another suggested new possibilities in the field of music with the law of octaves! The upshot of the affair was that poor Newlands was sent home thoroughly ridiculed, and his paper was refused publication in the Society's journal. That, however, did not prevent the Royal Society from making some amends twenty-one years later by awarding him its Davy Medal for the very paper which its sister organisation had refused to print."—Harrow.

Such instances can be multiplied. If I allude at all to some of these, it is only to throw some light on my later career.

Let me now make an excursion into the field of politics to illustrate the tragedy of old age. After the death of Parnell, Redmond became the one dominant figure in Irish political life and when the great war broke out, he announced from his place in the House of Commons that at this great national crisis, he and his compatriots, would forget their national grievances, and make common cause with his English friends. It is unnecessary to add with what a tremendous ovation his statement was received in the House. But he had evidently counted without his host.

It is true that the majority of the Irish people still owed allegiance to the Irish Parliamentary Party. But the volunteer movement had already been started and the irate and insane policy of the British Government in the wake of the Easter insurrection culminating in rage and panic and wholesale arrests and indiscriminate shootings under General Maxwell, drove the former into the camp of the Sein Feiners; and the latter began to capture the imagination and heart of the emotional Irish people. Redmond, it is needless to say, had his faith unshaken in the method of winning freedom for Ireland by speeches on the floor of the House of Commons and gradually lost his hold on his countrymen. The authentic leadership in due course passed into the hands of Arthur

Griffith, W. T. Cosgrave, Ramon De Valera, Michael Collins and other youngmen.

An interesting parallel may be drawn between Redmond and our own Surendranath Banerjee. A great patriot, the maker of politically conscious India, the hero of a hundred fights on the platform, he was one of the first to welcome the Montague-Chelmsford Reform and accepted a place in the Bengal Ministry with a salary of Rs. 64,000 a year. And this proved his undoing. Never were the poet's lines better verified :

"The valiant warrior famoused for fight,  
After a hundred victories once foiled,  
Is from the book of honor razed quite  
And all the rest forgot for which he toiled."

Needless to say Surendranath henceforth was regarded by the nationalists as a spent force and his influence in the political world dwindled into insignificance.

Another instance may be given here of the failure of men to march with the times. Lord Ripon, who was the idol of the people of India during his viceroyalty in the early eighties of the last century on account of his political reforms satisfying Indian aspirations, evidently became a back number in the cabinet in 1905-6. When Lord Morley, as the Indian Secretary, made the proposal that an Indian member should be included in the Viceregal Cabinet Ripon opposed it.<sup>2</sup> He had evidently failed to grasp that the India of 1884 was not the same as the India of 1905.

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<sup>2</sup> The above is a variant of Shakespeare's sonnet No. XXV (adopted by Emerson) where the reading is as follows :

"The *painful* warrior famoused for might,  
After a *thousand* victories once foiled."

<sup>3</sup> "Then what carried great weight, as was to be expected, was the fact that Ripon, whom nobody will suspect of want of sympathy with Indian hopes and claims, was hostile to the proposal on the merits—mainly on the secrecy argument—that the Member would have to know military and foreign secrets etc."—Lord Morley: *Recollections*, II. p. 211.

Somehow or other, in every sphere of activity my radicalism seems to be, instead of being on the wane, progressing towards the left, as readers of my life-sketch will not fail to notice.

One reason why pensioners and retirers from business find life dull, tedious and wearisome is that they have been self-centred and have never learnt to take any interest in affairs outside their own particular line. They have been mere wage earners; their attention has always been engrossed in the work appertaining to their immediate sphere and thus unable to take kindly to any kind of humanitarian occupation. I may also add that I live over again in the researches of my pupils and grand pupils and feel the ineffable joy of parental pride in their successful achievements.

I append here a list of papers published by Priyada Ranjan Rây, my colleague and ex-pupil in the Inorganic Department, independently and jointly with his pupils during 1933-35. Besides having recognition as an Inorganic Chemist, Mr. Rây has already established his reputation as an analyst in the field of both macro- and micro-chemistry. In this latter connection mention may be made of his work on the use of rubeanic acid as a micro-chemical reagent for copper, cobalt and nickel. This reagent is now in general use.

1. Substituted complex cyanocobaltates. II.—Disulphito-tetracyano cobaltates and the influence of substitution upon the properties of complex ions.—Z. für anorg. u. allg. Chemie, 1933.
2. On the constitution of molecular compounds.—Sir P. C. Rây Jubilee Volume of the Indian Chemical Society, 1933.
3. The decomposition of thiosulphato-pentacyano-cobaltic acid and the isomerism of thiosulphuric acid.—J. Indian Chem. Soc., 1933.
4. Dithiosulphate-diethylene-diamine cobaltates.—J. Indian Chem. Soc., 1933.
5. Quinaldinic acid as an analytical reagent: Estimation of copper, zinc, cadmium, uranium and colorimetric estimation of iron—Z. für anal. Chemie, 1933.
6. Compounds of hexamethylenetetramine with complex cobalt salts and the nature of residual affinity.—J. Indian Chem. Soc., 1934.
7. Simple and complex iodates of quadrivalent lead.—Z. für anorg. u. allg. Chemie, 1934.

8. Substituted cyanocobaltates. III.—Diaquo-tetracyano cobaltic acid and its salts, cobaltic cyanides.—Z. für anorg. u. allg. Chemie, 1934.
9. Compounds of dimethylglyoxime with cobaltous chloride.—J. Indian Chem. Soc., 1934.
10. Quinaldinic acid as a micro-reagent—I. Estimation of zinc and its separation from manganese.—Microchemie, 1935.
11. Quinaldinic acid as a micro-reagent—II. Estimation of copper and its separation from cadmium, manganese, nickel, cobalt, etc.—Microchemie, 1935.

*Papers published by pupils working under his guidance or supervision.*

1. Simple and complex metallic salts of thiosulphato pentacyano cobaltic acid. By S. N. Maulik.—J. Indian Chem. Soc., 1934.
2. Study of polyhalides I.—Formation and dissociation of polyhalides of hydrogen. By S. K. Ray.—J. Indian Chem. Soc., 1934.
3. Study of polyhalides II.—Formation and dissociation of polyhalides of sodium, potassium, strontium and barium. By S. K. Ray.—J. Indian Chem. Soc., 1934.
4. Study of polyhalides III.—Solubility method. By S. K. Ray.—J. Indian Chem. Soc., 1934.
5. Parachor and chemical constitution. I. By S. K. Ray.—J. Indian Chem. Soc., 1934.
6. Determination of parachor in solution. I. By S. K. Ray.—J. Indian Chem. Soc., 1934.
7. Parachor and ring structure. I. By S. K. Ray.—J. Indian Chem. Soc., 1934.

Then again, whenever a new industry is to be started in Bengal or anywhere in India I feel a sort of personal concern, as it were, in its infant career and my humble self is often in requisition to stand as its godfather. Hence the buoyancy and elasticity of youth never desert me.

Social service also has had a peculiar attraction for me. The distress caused by the famine, the flood, or the earthquake strikes a sympathetic chord in my heart and my never-failing colleagues and co-workers are not only by my side, but take care to drag me to the forefront.

The weak points and evils of the Hindu society as depicted in Volume I (Ch. XXVII) have affected me since the dawn of

my intelligence and I have never spared myself in enlisting my humble services towards their eradication.

Since the publication of the first volume, I have been called upon to undertake tours in the various parts of this vast peninsula covering some 30,000 miles. This sort of activity instead of bringing on fatigue due to over-exertion acts rather as tonic and relaxation ; I call it my holiday-making.

Unless you can march with the times and be *en courant* with the latest phases of activity and progress, you naturally degenerate into a foyey or fossil ; hence the tragedy of senescence. Somehow or other, almost intuitionally, I am surrounded in my laboratory by young researchers, who are thoroughly in touch with up-to-date knowledge of the subject. In the Bengal Chemical and Pharmaceutical Works Ltd. also, which is a field for applied chemistry, there are dozens of chemists who not only keep going on the daily routine requirements but are always alert and on the lookout for fresh fields and pastures new. As a matter of fact, several new processes have been worked out of late and a number of new preparations introduced.<sup>4</sup>

It is only a truism to say that in the laboratory as also in actual business to rest on the oars or to stand still means stagnation. "A rolling stone gathers no moss" is a trite saying. I keep clear of old people as their company is apt to give me a cold douche and damp my enthusiasm. I even take care to have no looking glass about me, as being a faithful remembrancer of my ownself, it reminds me of the havoc played by age on my appearance.

The misfortune of longevity is well illustrated in Louis XIV and Aurangzib, both of whom reigned half-a-century ;

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<sup>4</sup> About 30 papers have been communicated from the research laboratory of B. C. P. W. by Dr. B. C. Guha and his collaborators, of which I quote only a few :

*Nature*, 1932, 130, 741 ; 1933, 132, 447 ; *Journal of the Indian Chemical Society*, 1933, 10, 361 ; 1934, 11, 295.

the former even much longer and wielded absolute power and was a warning against over-centralization of authority. Despotic monarchs, who in the intoxication of power have their heads turned, if they happen to be longlived, end their days in a tragic condition. Louis XIV, who has the record of the longest reign in European history, built up a thoroughly personal system of government. Even the greatest of his ministers, such as Colbert (home affairs) and Louvois (war) found themselves controlled by the king. All that concerns the externals of kingship made him appear to the common eye as playing the rôle of *Grand Monarque*. The king was the State (*L'état c'est moi*) and in his regime all initiative in his administrators was necessarily lost.

Buckle (*History of Civilization in England*) thus sums up the reign of Louis XIV :

"The age of Louis XIV was an age of decay : it was an age of misery, of intolerance, and oppression ; it was an age of bondage, of ignominy, of incompetence.

"The poets, dramatists, painters, musicians, sculptors, architects, were, with hardly an exception, not only born, but educated under that freer policy, which existed before his time. When they began their labours, they benefited by a munificence which encouraged the activity of their genius. But in a few years, that generation having died off, the hollowness of the whole system was clearly exposed. More than a quarter of a century before the death of Louis XIV, most of these eminent men had ceased to live ; and then it was seen to how miserable a plight the country was reduced under the boasted patronage of the great king.

"Several years before his death, and when his protective system had been in full force for nearly half a century, there was not to be found in the whole of France a statesman who could develop the resources of the country, or a general who could defend it against its enemies. Both in the civil service and in the military service, every thing had fallen into disorder. At home there was nothing but confusion ; abroad there was nothing but disaster. The spirit of France succumbed, and was laid prostrate".

J. N. Sarkar thus admirably summarizes in his *History of Aurangzib* the last days of the Great Mogul :

"One by one the old, able and independent officers and courtiers of his earlier years had passed away, and he was now surrounded only

by timid sycophants and upstart nobles of his own creation, who could never venture to contradict him in his errors, nor give him honest counsel.

"The last years of his life were inexpressibly sad. On its public side there was the consciousness that his long reign of half a century had been a colossal failure. The endless war in the Deccan exhausted his treasury; the Government turned bankrupt; the soldiers starving from arrears of pay (usually three years overdue) mutinied; and during the closing years of his reign the revenue of Bengal, regularly sent by the honest and able diwan Murshid Quli Khan, was the sole support of the Emperor's household and army, and its arrival was eagerly looked forward to. While in the Deccan the Marathas remained supreme to the end, lawlessness reigned in many places of Northern and Central India also. The old Emperor in the far South lost control over his officers in Hindustan, and the administration grew slack and corrupt.

"On the political side he found that his lifelong endeavour to govern India justly and strongly had ended in anarchy and disruption throughout the empire. His own health had broken down, and the Court newsletters every now and then give us pathetic glimpses of the weak old Emperor. A sense of unutterable loneliness haunted the heart of Anrangzib in his old age. One by one all the older nobles had died out.

"This excessive interference of the head of the State kept his viceroys and commanders and even 'the men on the spot' in far off districts in perpetual tutelage: their sense of responsibility was destroyed, initiative and rapid adaptability to a changing environment could not be developed in them, and they tended to sink into lifeless puppets moved to action by the master pulling their strings from the capital. No surer means than this could have been devised for causing administrative degeneration in an extensive and diversified empire like India. High-spirited, talented and energetic officers found themselves checked, discouraged and driven to sullen inactivity. With the death of the older nobility, outspoken responsible advisers disappeared from his council, and Anrangzib in his later years, like Napoleon I, after the climax of Tilsit, could bear no contradiction, could hear no unpalatable truth, but surrounded himself with smooth-tongued sycophants and pompous echoes of his own voice. His ministers became no better than clerks passively registering his edicts."

The moral is obvious.

II—OLD AGE GENERALLY NOT FRUITFUL IN IDEAS AND  
PRODUCTIVENESS: EXCEPTIONS.

It is found generally that the great masterpieces in literature, art and discoveries in science have been produced or made between the ages varying from 25 to 45, but there are exceptions. Darwin (1809—82) inspite of continuous ill health published his epoch-making *Origin of Species* in 1859 and *Descent of Man* in 1876. No doubt the ideas had been germinating since a long time before the publication.

On the other hand, Cicero enumerates a great many instances of mental vigour, in fact, even in advanced years. "Temerity, indeed", says he, "is the usual characteristic of youth, as prudence is of old age" but then he refers to a "swarm of rash, unpractised, young orators."

"Sophocles continued in extreme old age to write tragedies. As he seemed to neglect his family affairs whilst he was wholly intent on his dramatic compositions, his sons instituted a suit against him in a court of judicature, suggesting that his understanding was impaired.

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"It is said that when the old bard appeared in court on this occasion, he desired that he might be permitted to read a play which he had lately finished, and which he then held in his hand: it was his *Œdipus in Colonos*. His request being granted, after he had finished the recital, he appealed to the judges whether they could discover in his performance any symptoms of an insane mind, and the result was that the court unanimously dismissed the complainants' petition. Did length of days weaken the powers of Homer, Hesiod, or Simonides, of Stesichorus, Isocrates or Gorgias? Did old age interrupt the studies of those first and most distinguished of the Greek philosophers, Pythagoras or Democritus, Plato or Xenocrates? or to descend into later times, did grey hairs prove an obstacle to the philosophic pursuits of Zeno, Cleanthes, or that famous Stoic whom you may remember to have seen in Rome, the



venerable Diogenes? On the contrary, did not each of these eminent persons persevere in their respective studies with unbroken spirit to the last moment of their extended lives? . . . . But I was going to observe, that I am now in my eighty-fourth year, and I wish I had a reason to boast with Cyrus that I feel no sensible decay of strength.

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"Yet I can with truth, you see, affirm that old age has not totally relaxed my nerves, and subdued my native vigour. . . . . As to those effects which are the necessary and natural evils attendant on long life, it imports us to counteract their progress by a constant and resolute opposition, and to combat the infirmities of old age as we would resist the approaches of a disease. To this end we should be regularly attentive to the article of health, use moderate exercise, and neither eat nor drink more than is necessary for repairing our strength, without oppressing the organs of digestion. Nor is this all: the intellectual faculties must likewise be assisted by proper care, as well as those of the body: for the powers of the body, like the flame in the lamp will become languid and extinct by time, if not duly and regularly recruited. Indeed, the mind and body equally thrive by a suitable exertion of their powers; with this difference, however, that bodily exercise ends in fatigue, whereas the mind is never wearied by its activity."

These expressions find an echo in another Roman, who lived sixteen centuries later, I mean Luigi Cornaro.

"I therefore affirm, that an old man even of a bad constitution, who leads a regular and sober life, is surer of a long one than a young man of the best constitution who leads a disorderly life.

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"In this I conformed to the proverb, which says, that a man, to consult his health, must check his appetite. Having in this manner, and for these reasons, conquered intemperance and irregularity, I betook myself entirely to a temperate and

regular life, which effected in me the alteration already mentioned, that is, in less than a year it rid me of all those disorders which had taken so deep a root in me.

"Thanks, however, to that regular and temperate course of life, I have ever led I am still capable of taking an active part in the public scenes of business. In fine, he who fills up every hour of his life in such kind of labours and pursuits as those I have mentioned, will insensibly slide into old age without perceiving its arrival: and his power instead of being suddenly and prematurely extinguished, will gradually decline by the gentle and natural effect of accumulated years."<sup>5</sup>

One or two other remarkable instances of mental vigour battling against senile decay may be mentioned. Speaking of Ranke Lord Acton says:

"I saw him last in 1877, when he was feeble, sunken, and almost blind, and scarcely able to read or write. He uttered his farewell with kindly emotion, and I feared that the next I should hear of him would be the news of his death. Two years later he began a *Universal History*, which is not without traces of weakness, but which, composed after the age of eighty-three, and carried, in seventeen volumes, far into the Middle Ages, brings to a close the most astonishing career in literature."

In our days mention may be made of two prominent Englishmen of letters, Bernard Shaw (b. 1856) and H. G. Wells (b. 1866), who evidently betray no signs of senility in their latest writings; whilst Professor H. E. Armstrong (now about 82), the doyen of English chemists, has wonderful retentive memory and is in full possession of vigour of intellect.

<sup>5</sup> Addison in his *Spectator* thus speaks of the Venetian:

"Cornaro, who was the author of the little treatise was of an infirm constitution, till about forty, when, by obstinately persisting in an exact course of temperance, he recovered a perfect state of health; in so much that at fourscore he published his book, which has been translated into English under the title of *Sure and certain methods of attaining a long and healthy life*."

## III—A PHYSICIAN'S RECEIPT FOR LONGEVITY.

"Get an incurable disease", said Oliver Wendell Holmes, himself a medical man, in giving a receipt for longevity—"Get an incurable disease, nurse it carefully, and you will see your strong healthy contemporaries dropping off one by one while you go on living." This is exemplified in the writings of Cicero and Cornaro quoted above. Emerson in his *Essay on Old Age* says: "We had a judge in Massachusetts who at sixty proposed to resign, alleging that he perceived a certain decay in his faculties; he was dissuaded by his friends, on account of the public convenience at that time. At seventy it was hinted to him that it was time to retire; but he now replied that he thought his judgment as robust and all his faculties as good as ever they were. But besides the self-deception, the strong and hasty laborers of the street do not work well with the chronic valetudinarian. Youth is everywhere in place. Age, like woman, requires fit surrounding. Age is comely in coaches, in churches, in chairs of state and ceremony, in council chambers, in courts of justice and historical societies. Age is becoming in the country. But in the rush and uproar of Broadway, if you look into the faces of the passengers there is dejection or indignation in the seniors, a certain concealed sense of injury and the lip made up with a heroic determination not to mind it. Few envy the consideration enjoyed by the oldest inhabitant. We do not count a man's years, until he has nothing else to count."

A veteran American chemist in the course of a review of the first volume of my *Life and Experiences* takes occasion to note:

"It is not too much to say that the gratifying development of chemistry in India in the last forty years is due directly and indirectly to Rây. This would be a marvellous thing for anybody to have done, but it is the more remarkable when one considers that Rây has been what most of us would call an invalid all his life. When thirteen years old he had a bad attack of dysentery which became chronic, making him a permanent valetudinarian with impaired digestive organs. He was a victim of indigestion, diarrhoea, and later on, of insomnia. He has had to submit to the most rigid observance of diet and regimen.

"All this however, was only half of Rây's life. To him the political was equally important. As a boy he had been attracted to the Brahmo Samaj movement which aimed at the abolition of Caste System, the removal of social inequalities (including the social relations between Englishmen and Indians) and uplifting of women by the spread of education among them."<sup>1</sup>

The reviewer, however, does not know—he may be pardoned for not knowing—that the above does but bare justice to my multifarious activities. I have had to respond to the call of every organization having anything to do with Swadeshi movement and at a moment's notice run to Bombay, Madras, Benares, Delhi, Lahore, Karachi to open exhibitions or to preside at conferences. As I am writing this Chapter suffering from a spell of insomnia in the suburbs of Calcutta near Barrackpore twelve miles away from the city, in the garden house of the expansion of Bengal Chemical and Pharmaceutical Works Ltd., I have to attend to diverse calls not only in connection with the affairs of this concern but with regard to three other industries in this locality. But I never allow my energies to be dissipated; my attention is always confined to one subject at a time. Of Mussolini we read that he "has a mind divided into insulated compartments, so that he can pass from one subject to another with complete freshness of outlook. He sleeps little, but profoundly and at will." A few days ago (Jan. 1935) Reuter wired that over and above six portfolios he has taken up another. But unfortunately I am not a superman like Mussolini, but an ordinary mortal not possessing a fraction of his cool nerves and inexhaustible fund of energies.

It is only by rigid observance of the rules laid down by me that I am able to do what little I can lay claim to. In fact the writer has added this chapter as an *apologia pro vita sua*. I have stated elsewhere that I became a chemist by mistake or accident. Literature, including history and biography, has always a fascination for me even in my old age. I have also

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<sup>1</sup> Wilder D. Bancroft: *Journal of Chemical Education*, Vol. II, 1934, pp. 255-56.

indulged in many hobbies, and pursuit of hobbies is my relaxation. Recently agricultural pursuits including dairy farming have added fresh zest to my life.

#### IV—YOUTH *vs.* AGE.

Mustafa Kemal Pasha, the maker of New Turkey, was 43 years old when he with the ragged, foodless cohorts, smashed the Greek army. His leading military commanders, Ismet and Rauf, were of comparatively young age.

If one were inclined to analyse the age of the fourteen Marshals on active list created by Napoleon in 1804, he would find that seven of them were between 36 and 39, three between 41 and 42. "At the date of the battle of Austerlitz, Napoleon was thirty-six, Berthier fifty-two, Bernadotte forty-two, Davout thirty-five, Soult thirty-six, Lannes and Mortier thirty-seven; the average age being thirty-nine. Kutusov, the Russian Commander, was sixty.

"At Jena, the Emperor was thirty-seven, Berthier fifty-three, Bernadotte forty-three, Davout thirty-six, Soult and Lannes and Ney thirty-seven, Bessières and Mortier thirty-eight and Murat thirty-nine. The Duke of Brunswick was seventy-one, Hohenlohe was sixty-one, Blücher sixty-four and Mollendorf eighty-four."

When Mussolini first took his seat as a Fascist Deputy in the Parliament he was thirty-eight years old and the average age of his fellow Blackshirt Deputies was twenty-nine. A year later (1922) he organized his celebrated March on Rome.

Nor need I add that Alexander the Great was thirty-three when he had conquered the then-world. The prominent Irish leaders who figured in the late campaign for winning the Free State were Michael Collins and De Valera.

"Collins was at the time [Easter week of 1916] slim and equally boyish in appearance and manner, hardly looking his 25 years and no occasion had arisen to call forth a display of his extraordinary qualities of intellect and character.

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<sup>1</sup> A. G. Macdonnel: *Napoleon and His Marshals*, pp. 114, 132.

"At the Keating Branch of the Gaelic League Michael Collins met several youngmen who later were closely associated with him in his work, and played an important part in the events of succeeding years. Among them were Fionán Lynch, now Minister of Fisheries in the Free State ; Gearoid O'Sullivan, who later became Adjutant General of the Irish volunteers ; Diarmuid O'Hegarty, later Director of Organisation of the volunteers, and Secretary of Dail Eireann, now Secretary to the Free State ministry ; and Con Collins, then a particular chum of Sean MacDiarmuda, later a member of Dail Eireann. He also renewed his acquaintance with Colm O'Murchadha, whom he had known in London ; Colm is now Secretary to Dail Eireann."<sup>8</sup>

When you want to change the old order and begin *de novo* on a clean slate as it were, then younger men boiling over with enthusiasm, flushed with and brimful of new ideas come to the fore ; thus we find that premier Giolitti, an old Parliamentarian and his creatures, Facta and Nitti, brought up in the tradition of liberalism, intent on doing everything through constitutionalism, *i.e.* Parliamentary majority, though the latter was often secured by means of questionable methods, utterly failed to stem the tide of communism. He simply temporised with this group and tried the master game of working off one party against another ; affairs were thus drifting from bad to worse. Trade was penalised, industries gutted, and railway and telegraph services were almost paralysed due to strike among workmen. There was not only invasion of factories but also of private estates with destruction of farms, crops and livestock. Finances were upset ; and the budget debit balance piled up by millions of lire. At this very critical but psychological moment Mussolini conceived the bold plan of his march to Rome. His dictatorial government succeeded in restoring peace, and industries and agriculture once again flourished. He also changed Italian foreign policy from drift to positive drive.

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<sup>8</sup> *Michael Collins and the Making of a New Ireland* by Piaras Béaslái, Vol. I., pp. 76, 80.

One more example :

"Not only is the world the heritage of the young, as has been said. The young make the world what it is. Dr. Duff had really done his work in India when he was twenty-eight; he had, apparently, completed its parallel side in Great Britain when he was thirty-three; he had consolidated the whole system, and he saw it bearing rare spiritual as well as moral and intellectual fruit before he was thirty-seven. So, in the same field of reformation, Luther and Melancthon in Germany, Pascal and Calvin in France, Wesley and Simcon in England, and Chalmers in Scotland had sowed the seed and reaped the early harvests while still within the age which Augustine pronounces the 'culmen' and Dante the 'key of the arch' of life."—*The Life of Alexander Duff* by Geo. Smith, Vol. II, 1879.

In Russia again, when Tsardom was abolished and the old order gave place to the new, the prominent figures, Lenin, the apostle of Sovietdom, Trotsky and Stalin were comparatively young men.

Not need we refer to Hitler, the quondam labourer under a contractor, the leader of the Nazis, who has made himself the dictator of Germany. Even the aged Hindenburg, the hero of Tannenberg, had to court his favour. These instances would suffice to prove that when the old regime perishes and a new one arises sphinx-like out of its ashes, it is the young who usher in the fateful epoch; in other words men brought up in the *ancien regime*, who have imbibed its principles along with their mothers' milk, find it difficult to break with the past and accept novel ideas and look askance at the doings of youth. They fret and grumble and ultimately bow to the inevitable. "The march of Hitler's youthful followers is as defiant as the air of the youngmen. They do not want to accept compromises and half measures. . . . The younger generation is aligned against age, because the search for 'something new' must go on ceaselessly, feverishly, frantically. Fathers and sons, mothers and daughters are on the opposite side of the fences and the offspring knows no mercy in its dealings with the old. The search for a New Renaissance is on."—Lengyel: *Hitler*.

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## CHAPTER XXI.

### HALF A CENTURY AND AFTER.

I have been rather shy of describing in detail my services in the cause of chemistry especially in their application to my native land. Some people have expressed surprise and disappointment that in the first volume of the *Life and Experiences of a Bengali Chemist* comparatively little space has been allotted to the personal and chemical side while much has been devoted to the "Experiences".

Looking across a gulf of half a century with some degree of detachment I can afford to amplify my life as a chemist. Strange as it may appear I discern some degree of similarity between my life and that of W. H. Perkin (b. 1838). When but a lad of seventeen the great English chemist had earned imperishable renown by his discovery of the first aniline dye (mauve). He had achieved, what is still more to his credit, the building up of the first synthetic dye-industry in the world. His leaning towards chemistry led him to seek admission to the Royal College of Science, of which the head professor was no other than Hofmann, "an imported product."

"When but seventeen Perkin already had shown his mettle to such an extent that Hofmann appointed him to an assistantship. This otherwise flattering appointment had, however, the handicap that it left Perkin no time for research. To overcome this the enthusiastic boy fixed up a laboratory in his own home, and there, in the evenings and in vacation time, the lad tried explorations into unknown regions.

"The celebrated experiment which was to give the 17-year-old lad immortality for all time was carried out in the little home laboratory in the Easter vacation 1856.



"Full of hope and courage, the young lad had decided to stake his future on the success or failure of this enterprise. He was going to leave the Royal College of Science, and with the financial backing of his father—who seems to have had a sublime faith in his son's ability—he was going to build a factory where the dye could be produced in quantity.

"Hofmann was shown the dye and was told of the resolution. The well-meaning professor, who seemed to have had more than a passing fondness for the lad, tried all he could to persuade Perkin against any such undertaking. And let it be added that in that day, to any man with any practical common sense, Perkin's venture seemed doomed from the start.

"A site for the factory was obtained at Greenford Green, near Harrow, and the building commenced in June, 1857.

"At this time", wrote Perkin years later, "neither I nor my friends had seen the inside of the chemical works, and whatever knowledge I had was obtained from books. This, however, was not so serious a drawback as at first it might appear to be ; as the kind of apparatus required and the character of the operations to be performed were so entirely different from any in use that there was but little to copy from."

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"The mode of procedure, the technic, the apparatus—all are based on the work of this eighteen-year-old lad. Only those who have attempted to repeat on an industrial scale what has been successfully carried out in the laboratory on a small scale, will appreciate the difficulties to be overcome, and the extraordinary ability that Perkin must have possessed to have overcome them. Think of a Baeyer who synthesised indigo in his university laboratory, and then think of the twenty years of continuous labor that was required before the Badische Anilin u. Soda Fabrik, with its hundreds of expert chemists and mechanics, was in a position to produce indigo in quantity. And it would have taken them and others much longer time but for the pioneer work of young Perkin.

"Such dimensions has the coal-tar industry assumed since then that in 1913, at one single factory, the Baeyer Works in Elberfeld, Germany, there were employed 8,000 workmen and 330 university trained chemists. Says *Punch* :

There's hardly a thing that a man can name  
Of use or beauty in life's small game  
But you can extract in alembic or jar  
From the "physical basis" of black coal tar—  
Oil and ointment, and wax and wine,  
And the lovely colors called aniline;  
You can make anything from a salve to a star  
If you only know how, from black coal-tar.

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"In 1874 Perkin sold his factory, and from henceforth devoted himself exclusively to pure research.

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"When Perkin left the Royal College of Science at 17 he had this in mind. Financial insecurity may spur you on, but to give the very best that is in you requires freedom from such burdens.

"What led him to give up the factory and to devote himself exclusively to pure science was sheer love of the subject. It is the type of the love which, when associated with genius, has led to the world's greatest literary and artistic productions.

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"The year 1906 marked the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the coal-tar industry, and the entire scientific world stirred itself to do honour to the founder."<sup>1</sup>

I fully endorse every word of the eulogy of Perkin ; his great achievement as a lad of 18 was really remarkable.

I have referred at some length to the life-work of Perkin as a sort of setting to my much humbler career. It should not be lost sight of that in my case the initial difficulties were much

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<sup>1</sup> Benjamin Harrow : *Eminent Chemists of Our Time*.

greater. Perkin was born in 1838. England was even then supreme in industrial, commercial and mercantile matters; nay, in what is called heavy chemical industry, she was indisputably as she is even now ahead of continental countries. As for America, she had not yet emerged from her agricultural life. Tennant had founded his alkali works, based on Le Blanc process, at St. Rollox, Glasgow as early as 1818 and his sulphuric acid and alkali plant was perhaps one of the biggest of its kind in Europe. While James Muspratt started in 1823 his works near Liverpool also based upon Le Blanc's. Various other colossal collateral chemical industries had sprung up in Great Britain.

"Andrew Ure (1778-1857) in 1821 published a Dictionary of Chemistry founded on that of Nicholson. This Dictionary attained a 4th edition in 1835 and formed the basis of Henry Watts. The Royal Society's catalogue gives a list of 35 papers by him dealing with physics, pure and applied chemistry."

Ure's *Dictionary* among others contains elaborate accounts of the preparation of hydrocyanic or prussic acid, "ferroprussiate of potash and bleaching methods with the aid of oxymuriate of lime" as also of chemical equivalents or proportions. "Ferroprussiate of potash is now manufactured in several parts of Great Britain on the large scale. Nothing can exceed in beauty, purity, and perfection the crystals of it prepared at Campsie by Messrs. Mackintosh and Wilson" (Ure's *Dictionary*, 1821).

It would thus appear that 17 years before the birth of Perkin, chemistry, theoretical and applied, was vigorously pursued in England. Nor should it be forgotten that Perkin not only got encouragement but also financial backing of his father, a builder and contractor.

Now to return from this relevant digression to my case. For two thousand years and more the Hindu intellect had revelled in metaphysical subtleties and in transcendental flights of sublime verities. Ram Mohun Roy's memorable letter to Lord Amherst (1823) may be cited as a protest against the perpetuation of mediævalism or scholasticism. Bengal was

again from the 15th to the 18th century the home of *Navya Nyaya* or the modern School of Logic. I have said somewhere, that such a people should take to English law, which was "a tortuous ungodly jungle," which "for its lucrative long-windedness" was difficult to beat, is quite in the fitness of things—they would be as much in their own elements as fish in water. To twist the mentality of the Bengali, or for the matter of that the Indian, and give it a new orientation in the study of physical sciences was in itself a task involving almost superhuman energies. Then again the Bengali has a hereditary aversion for industrial enterprises. Nor should it be forgotten that England had begot a Roger Bacon (b. 1214, d. *circa* 1294), and a Newton and a Boyle nearly 200 years before Perkin drew his breath. In short the soil of England was eminently propitious for the birth of a Perkin, a Davy, a Faraday, not to mention the eminent luminaries of later generation as also for industrial chemistry. India was as yet quite a stranger to physical sciences, at least for the last 1500 years or so. The difficulty of inducing young Indians to take to the study of chemistry and allied branches will now be understood. No doubt physical sciences had begun to figure in the curriculum of studies for the university degrees ; but they were taught as metaphysical curiosities, not counting as factors in the growth of intellectual progress much less with an aim to their application in industrial progress (*cf.* Vol. I. pp. 147—50). I had thus to keep both the ideas before me—to study science for its own sake and also to harness it for the development of industry. As Principal James said in 1912: "Another achievement of his which ought very specially to be remembered is the establishment of the Bengal Chemical and Pharmaceutical Works, an important and successful enterprise. It is everywhere recognised that one of the greatest needs of the time for all India and for Bengal in particular is industrial development. Dr. P. C. Ray is not a businessman, but a man of science ; but where businessmen have failed, he has helped to found a really successful industrial enterprise. And whereas he has contributed to the enterprise the best he had to give, his

knowledge and genius for chemistry, and done so much to make it a commercial success, he has left it to others to draw the dividends" (Vol. I. pp. 180-81).

Perkin showed the path and sold his factory so that he might devote himself exclusively to pure research. That was comparatively easy in England or Germany where industrialists are always ready at hand to take up a paying concern based upon entirely new process. But in our country such a course was out of question. Even after 42 years of slow but uninterrupted career of prosperity I find that my humble services in connection with the Bengal Chemical are indispensable.

In 1928 when the Indian Science Congress had its session in Calcutta, the Chemical Department of the Presidency College was "at home" to the Chemical and Physical Sections of the Congress. Principal H. E. Stapleton, who was formerly my colleague in the Presidency College as Professor of Chemistry (1903-5), in welcoming the guests observed that the following day they had been invited to visit the Chemical Works and thus they would have a unique opportunity of seeing with their own eyes what progress had been achieved in this direction from very humble beginnings. Speaking for himself he was inclined to set a much higher value on this application of our science to industry than on Dr. Ray's discoveries in connection with the nitrites, as what India needed at the moment was industrial development so that her own inexhaustible resources might be utilised for the country's benefit. Opinions might differ on this point, but I may be permitted to add that pure research claims me as her own even at this advanced stage of my life.

I referred above to some degree of similarity between my life and that of Perkin. But it is only partially true.

"Aside from his scientific achievements, Perkin's life was extremely uneventful. To him his science was his life, and he seems to have had no avocation. We find no romantic dash-

no such many-sidedness, as characterised his great countryman, Ramsay, for example."<sup>2</sup>

My life has been so many-sided and chequered and diversified that the parallelism ends here.

#### I—INORGANIC CHEMISTRY—ITS INFINITE POSSIBILITIES.

When I presented my thesis for the Doctorate in 1886 I asked my Professor (Crum Brown) why it is that the pages of the chemical journals were almost entirely devoted to organic researches. His reply was that it was rather difficult to choose a subject in the inorganic side as there was not much room in it for the discovery of new facts—in fact, inorganic chemistry was played out. But while I was busy with inorganic chemistry at the laboratory, the eminent French chemist was laying the foundation of a new and unexplored field in this direction. "He began his labors at a time when chemists had all but deserted the field of inorganic chemistry for the chemistry of the carbon compounds. The cry had been raised that inorganic chemistry had exhausted itself." Moissan's work soon convinced people that the cry was a false one. Inorganic chemistry had, and still has, rich fields for investigators. What was needed was a man of genius; and such a man was found in the person of Moissan.

It is rather a remarkable circumstance in the history of chemistry that of the halogen family of elements one was discovered by the Swedish chemist, Scheele, and the rest by Frenchmen.

"The work which, beginning in 1884, led Moissan to his first great achievement, the isolation of fluorine, has a history. Fluorine in the form of its compounds had long been known. Without ever having been isolated, the element was included in the group of elements known as the halogens, or salt-producers, because its salts showed striking similarities to salts of the rest of the group. The commonest member of this family is chlorine, and its sodium salt, sodium chloride,

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<sup>2</sup> The quotations are from Harrow's *Eminent Chemists of Our Time*.

is the table salt so indispensable as a food. The other elements belonging to the halogen are bromine and iodine.

"Chlorine was discovered as far back as 1774 by Scheele, the famous Swedish chemist. In 1811 Courtois discovered iodine in the ashes of sea-weed, and fifteen years later Balard discovered bromine. It was not, however, till 1886 that the fourth, and the last member of the family, fluorine, was isolated by Moissan. The activity of this element—it is the most active (i.e., chemically active) element known—had prevented its isolation prior to this date.

"Moissan next turned his attention to make artificial diamond. This again led to the invention of the electric furnace giving a temperature of  $2000^{\circ}\text{C}$  to  $3000^{\circ}\text{C}$ ; with its aid the most refractory metals could be volatilised such as copper, silver, platinum, gold, tin and iron. Extensive researches on the combination of elements with carbon, boron and silicon to form carbides, borides and silicides respectively were carried out. It is enough here to lay stress on calcium carbide, which as the generator of acetylene has found universal use. With the electric furnace as with fluorine, Moissan embodied the results of his researches in book form under the title *Le Four Electrique*. In the preface to this work we find an admirable spirit admirably expressed: 'But what I cannot convey in the following pages is the keen pleasure which I have experienced in the pursuit of these discoveries. To plough a new furrow; to have full scope to follow my own inclination; to see on all sides new subject of study bursting upon me; that awakens a true joy which only those can experience who have themselves tasted the delights of research.'"<sup>8</sup>—Harrow.

Again, a new field with infinite possibilities has been added to inorganic chemistry by the discovery of radium by

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. "On the Continent his scientific investigations are directly credited with a renaissance in the study of inorganic chemistry, which, particularly in Germany, had been almost entirely neglected for the more productive field of organic chemical research. Even in England, which has always held a high position in the pursuit of inorganic chemistry, his work has been of great assistance in instilling enthusiasm and encouraging the deeper study of the subject."—*Nature*, 1907, Vol. 75, p. 419.

the Curies. In fact, so vast has the literature on radium grown up that a special journal was founded by Madam Curie—*Le Radium*—to embody the ever growing researches in this field. Along with this the transmutation of elements, effected in the laboratories of Rutherford and Chadwick at Cambridge, Curie and Joliot in Paris by the bombardment of lighter elements like beryllium, boron, carbon, nitrogen, aluminium, magnesium etc. with projectiles like alpha-particles, protons and neutrons can be mentioned. Of course they are obtained in quantities the existence of which can only be proved by delicate physical methods. Recently "heavy" hydrogen and "heavy" water have already engaged the attention of investigators with results which are most remarkable and of far-reaching importance.

It will thus be seen that inorganic chemistry far from being exhausted has infinite possibilities. This evidently illustrates the soundness of Newton's remark that he was only picking up pebbles on the sea-shore, while the great ocean of learning remained unexplored.

## II—THE RÔLE OF ACCIDENT IN SCIENCE.

I have said elsewhere that I became a chemist by accident as my inclination and leaning in early years lay towards literature and history.

How accidents play a prominent and momentous part in the history of science may well be illustrated by a few tangible examples. Ramsay evinced early a passion for languages. In after years as president of an international scientific gathering, he would astound the assembly by addressing them successively in French, German and Italian. "His introduction to chemistry came in quite an unexpected way. A football skirmish resulted in his breaking a leg, and to lessen the monotony of convalescence, Ramsay read Graham's Chemistry, with the object, as he frankly confesses, of learning how to make fire-works. During the next four years his bed room was full of bottles, and test tubes, and often full of strange odors and of startling noises. But systematic chemistry was



not taken up till 1869, three years after he had entered the University of Glasgow. Then, it seems, the passion came on, and with it, a passion for the cognate science, physics."

Of van't Hoff we read that "his own tastes led him to entomology and to literature, neither of which seemed practical enough, however, to the young Dutchman. To the end of his day Byron remained his god, and much of van't Hoff's early life and thought were modelled after that of the poet. Had not Byron declared that Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* was one of the most instructive books that had ever been written? Forthwith does van't Hoff plunge into Burton." No wonder he wrote English poetry in imitation of his god. "Fortunately for our Science, van't Hoff did not receive much encouragement from a fellow poet, and once again he turned his eyes to chemistry and Bonn and Kekulé." His innate love of chemistry was awakened. "The laboratory is a temple," writes he to his father, ". . . and in the lecture room there are to be seen daily about a hundred of our most promising youngmen, gathered from ten different states, to hear and to see Kekulé, whose fame has spread itself over half the world."

"Moissan's love of literature led the youngman to attempt the writing of a play—so often an emotional outlet for the youths below and above twenty. The play must have had merits, for it came near being produced at the Odéon.

"Perhaps it was as well that the play was not produced, for it might have made him neither a good dramatist nor a good chemist."

The American chemist, T. W. Richards inherited a taste for landscape painting from his father and "could a son of his do less than follow in his footsteps?" Fortunately he got his inspiration from a close friend of the family, J. P. Cooke whose *New Chemistry* gave a turning point to his career.

Victor Meyer, one of the greatest of organic chemists, during his early years at the gymnasium had "leanings rather towards literature than science. The drama especially had a strong attraction for him. Indeed, at fifteen, the boy had

quite made up his mind to become an actor. To his father's remonstrances, who watched these developments with much perturbation, Victor replied: 'Never can I become anything else—never! I feel it. In any other profession I shall remain a good-for-nothing the rest of my life.' Hoping against hope that possibly the university atmosphere would tend to direct Victor's thoughts in another direction, the family persuaded the youth to proceed to Heidelberg, there to attend some lectures in the company of his elder brother. In Bunsen the youngman encountered one of those rare minds who can see and demonstrate the beauty and poetry of anything they happen to be engaged in. From the lips of Bunsen chemistry issued forth as a song to nature, and as a song to nature Meyer caught the refrain. Here he followed Kirchhoff's lectures on physics, Kopp's on theoretical chemistry, Helmholtz's on physiology, Erlenmeyer's on organic chemistry, and Bunsen's on general chemistry—truly as illustrious a band of scholars as could be found anywhere." Again "Sandmeyer, one of Meyer's discoveries, is to-day known wherever chemistry flourishes. He started as a mechanic in Meyer's laboratory but soon gave this up to devote all his time to chemistry."<sup>4</sup> Similar instances may be cited in other branches of science.

I have brought together the above examples to illustrate a chapter in psychology. There is, it appears, in every human being a subconscious element, which ordinarily lies dormant, but brought under favourable circumstances it awakens up and submerges the conscious elements. In history we often read: "The hour makes the man." But it is not every man who rises equal to the occasion; it is the rare individual in whom the latent subconscious element already exists that is rendered active. Hence opportunities should be given to every one so that the best in him be brought out. Napoleon's policy of opening a career to merit only "*carrière ouverte à la mérite*"

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<sup>4</sup> The quotations as above are from Harrow's *Eminent Chemists of Our Time*.

forcibly illustrates the point. Under the Bourbons no opportunity was given to the ordinary commoner to rise or to develop his inherent qualities. All the highest posts in the civil and especially in the military service were the monopoly of the "blue-blooded." Peter the Great, though a man "whó was uneducated, unmannerly and uncivilized, made precedence depend on public service . . . a new aristocracy superseded the old"—a new aristocracy, that is to say, based on intrinsic merit and not on the accident of birth.

On the eve of my departure from London in 1926, I received a letter from Walker (Sir James), which is reproduced below. When the chemical laboratory was being removed from the old building to the new in the suburbs of Edinburgh, Walker had to search carefully the shelves and the drawers of the Professor's private room for the recovery of all important documents and papers. In the course of which he came across my thesis presented for the doctorate degree. The introductory page of the thesis as also a page of my note book is appended below as photographic reproductions. My handwriting of the present time also is given side by side. It might be of some interest to the graphologists.

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH,  
Department of Chemistry,  
15 July 1926.

Dear Ráy,

I am sending as I promised the record of some of your early work here which you may now find of historical interest. . . . .

Yours sincerely,  
James Walker.

Title Page of the Thesis.

Conjugated ("gepaarte") Sulphates  
 of the  
 Copper-magnesium group:  
 A Study of Isomorphous mixtures  
 and  
 Molecular combinations.

- I. Historical and Introductory . . . . . pp. 1-6
- II. Investigations: . . . . . " 6-19
- III. Discussion. . . . . " 20-27
- IV. Summary and Conclusion . . . . . p. 28
- V. Crystallography . . . . . , 29.

P. C. Ray.  
 Presented on 8th Nov. 1886.

## First Page of the Thesis.

# I

## Historical and Introductory

I cannot do better than begin with a brief historical sketch and a résumé of the papers containing references bearing upon the subject.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> of Dec. 1819 Mitscherlich read before the Academy of Berlin a valuable communication, which for the first time clearly enunciated the characteristics of Isomorphism\*. Hitherto the view propounded by the celebrated French crystallographer and mineralogist Häuy, namely: "la même forme cristalline pour une qu'elle ne soit pas une forme limite, suppose les mêmes formes substances réunies dans les mêmes proportions" was in the ascendant. It should, however, be remembered that Fuchs had already pointed out that the Carbonates of lime, baryta and Strontia have an identical form and can grow with one another. Berthollet had even found that on mixing together Copperstine and iron sulphide he obtained crystals which contained 95 per cent. of  $ZnS_2$ , 21 per cent. of  $CuS_2$  and only 5 per cent. of  $FeS_2$ , but which had the same crystalline form as the latter; indeed in his "mélanges chimiques ou association non mécanique en proportions indéfinies" we get a distinct glimpse of what we now understand by an "isomorphic mixture". Leblanc and Gay-Lussac had also recorded similar observations. Häuy tried to obviate all difficulty by holding that in the above combinations a body, even

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\* Sur la Relation qui existe entre la forme cristalline et les proportions chimiques. (Annals de Chim. et de Phys. tome 14 p. 179. ibid. tome 19. pp. 350-419.).

A Page from the Note-Book of 1882.

Nov. 1. 12.

Firmness (stability) of a compound is measured by the amount of heat evolved.

Direct and reverse chemical <sup>operations</sup> separations.

Compounds having a complex structure: in this case chemical analysis is ~~of~~ preferable, whereas in those substances whose structure is comparatively simple synthesis (the reverse operation) is the better method, then it is very difficult to decompose  $\text{CaO}$ .

Distinction between heat and Temp. Gault Nov. 29. and Fairb. Rec. p. 1. 345.

Unit of heat (Thermal Unit) is that which is required to raise the Temp. of 1 unit of water (say a pound or gramme) from  $0^\circ$  to  $1^\circ\text{C}$ .

Sp. heat, what is meant by it:

There are very, very few substances whose sp. heat is greater than that of water.

Water is a good solvent of <sup>chemical</sup> many things, hence it is almost impossible to get <sup>perfectly</sup> pure water in nature.

By distillation we can get rid of only non-volatile impurities; Volatile impurities can be got rid of by careful and repeated boiling.

March, 1938

and give it a new orientation in the study of physical sciences was in itself a task involving almost superhuman energies. Then again the Bengali has a hereditary aversion for industrial enterprises.

Nor should it be forgotten that England had begot a Roger Bacon <sup>(c. 1214)</sup> and a Newton and a Boyle more than 200 years before Perkin drew his breath. In short, the soil of England was eminently propitious for the birth of a Perkin, a Faraday, a Faraday, not to mention the eminent luminaries of a later generation.

India was as yet quite a stranger to physical sciences, at least for the last 1500 years or so. The difficulty of inducing young Indians to take to the study of chemistry and allied branches will now be understood. No doubt physical sciences had begun to figure in the curriculum of studies for the University degrees; but they were taught as metaphysical curiosities, not counting as factors in the growth of intellectual progress or as such much less with a

## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE NEW CONSTITUTION AND NASCENT NATIONAL INDUSTRIES.

The new Constitution which is going to be forced down the reluctant throat of the Indian people has spread a shiver of despair among those who are struggling with nascent industries. Mr. Mohan L. Shah, Vice-president of the Indian Chamber of Commerce, Calcutta, at the annual meeting of the Chamber on the 22nd February 1935 has already sounded a note of warning.

"The President has rightly remarked in his speech that the commercial safeguards as embodied in the J. P. C. Report and in the new Government of India Bill now before the Parliament will make impossible the development of national industries especially when they come into conflict with British interests. Sections 111-116 of the new Bill would severely handicap the powers and authority of the Legislature of the future and render difficult the pursuit of any national economic policy. For example, Section 113 provides that a company incorporated whether before or after the passing of this Act by or under the laws of the United Kingdom and the members of the governing body of any such company and its share-holders, officers, agents and servants shall be deemed to have complied with requirements and conditions laid down by any Federal or Provincial law relating to companies trading in British-India about incorporation or capital, control, management or personnel. In other words, if any legislation is passed, say, restricting Indian coastal trade or inland navigation to vessels whose capital, ownership, management and service are 75 per cent Indian, British companies registered in England with sterling capital and employing non-Indians will be construed to have complied with these provisions without actually doing so. The same remarks apply to any protection to Indian insurance or banking interests. As regards the grant of subsidies and bounties from Indian revenue, it would be impossible under the new provisions to refuse a bounty to, say, Lever Bros. or Imperial Chemicals if such a bounty is to be given to Indian soap or chemical enterprises, because otherwise it would be regarded as discriminatory. I doubt whether in the constitution of any country in the world more unjust and anti-national clauses could be framed and such restrictions imposed on the Legislature make impossible the development of national industries. If growing national enterprises have to be aided against competing and powerful non-national interests,



it has been provided that it will be obligatory to assist the powerful alien interests as well. These absurd and unjust provisions are sought to be defended on the ground of reciprocity. Mahatma Gandhi once characterised such reciprocity as that between a giant and a dwarf. Reciprocity, as Sir Pheroze Sethna pointed out in his recent speech in the Council of State, implies a certain measure of equality or similarity of conditions in the countries concerned. Is there any equality of conditions between the British shipping which is the largest and most powerful in the world and Indian shipping which has still to grow? 98 per cent. of the coastal trade of England is carried on by British vessels while only about 20 per cent. of the coastal trade of India is carried on by Indian vessels. The question of reciprocity between Indian and British interests can be seriously discussed only when Indian shipping industry has developed almost to the level of British shipping and not before that. It is not surprising that a moderate businessman like Sir Pheroze Sethna has characterised this talk of reciprocity as down-right hypocrisy and mere sham and in his interview on the new Constitution Bill a responsible moderate leader, Sir Chinulal Setalvad, denounced the position regarding shipping in the new Constitution, which, he declared was 'a gross mockery that would prevent the development of Indian shipping against competing British interests.' Under the new Constitution, there would be no possibility of Government safeguarding even key industries, nor would they be able to develop and expand such industries.

"In my personal relationship, I have found the Englishman to be a bold, generous and trusting fellow but unfortunately when the Britishers act in a body and deal with political and economic questions, they are not so statesmanlike or bold and generous. I would like them to remember that they cannot compel a nation to buy goods against its wishes or trade by the help of safeguards and reservations. The best safeguard is the good-will of a people and if Indians achieve real responsibility through the help of the great British commercial community, their position will be fully safeguarded as Indians will out of a sense of honour, if not gratitude, look after the interests of Britishers as their own. I would certainly welcome a trade agreement between England and India on fair and equal terms but England cannot have both treaties and safeguards and must decide whether they want to trade with the help of one or the other."

The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce has recently (March 23, 1935) adopted the draft resolutions for the 18th annual meeting in the course of which it says :

"The constitution laid down in the Government of India Bill does not in any way conform or approach to the promises and pledges held

out to India from time to time, and is more reactionary than the White Paper Scheme. The scheme proposed is based upon complete distrust in the sense of fair play of Indian Nationals and their ability to govern their own country and postulates numerous safeguards in the interests of British trade and industry which cut at the very root of fiscal autonomy and are a direct impediment in the way of national trade and indigenous industries, apart from their degrading character which no self-respecting nation can accept."

In fact, British connection has been the cause not only of the ruin of our cottage industries one by one but detrimental to the growth of the new industries on modern lines. Whereas in Japan the state has done everything in her power to help start her industries, the foreign rulers of India have all along done their level best "to employ the arms of political injustice to keep down and ultimately strangle a competitor with whom he could not have contended on equal terms." It is of a piece with England's previous dealings with India as regards financial matters.

It is a truism to say that but for the protection at least in the infant stages America, Canada and the dominions in general as also the continental countries could never have built their industries. India is a mere "possession." She can claim no such right. True she has got protective duties to build up her sugar industry, but then the competition lay with Java, who used to export into the Indian markets, sugar to the extent of 15 crores of rupees or more without buying anything adequate in return in the shape of imports. Moreover Java is not a British possession. Japan, an independent power, has forced India on the quota principle to buy so much of her textiles etc. on the understanding that she will buy in return so much of her raw cotton. When, however, the competition lies with direct British interests poor India must be sacrificed.

The Imperial Chemical Industries (India) Ltd. has already established soap industries in Bombay and Calcutta and has acquired mining rights in the Punjab which will enable her in the near future to manufacture soda, sulphuric acid and other chemicals. Our infant chemical industries are thus threatened with extinction. For, when the I. C. I. spreads her

tentacles all over India, no indigenous competitor will be able to survive ; nay he will be strangled out of existence. How keenly the concession granted without consulting Indian opinion is felt will be realised from the extracts from the letters of Mr. Ruchi Ram Sahni, (late professor of chemistry, Government College, Lahore), President Northern India Chemical Manufacturers' Association.

#### I.—MORTGAGING THE ECONOMIC RESOURCES OF INDIA.

"I have read with pain and disgust of the latest attempt on the part of the *trustees for India to mortgage* the economic resources of their ward for generations to come. . . . . What have the British Government in India done towards the training of their 'wards' for industrial careers? The pre-British India was as much an industrial country as it was an agricultural country. It would be perfectly useless now to go over the story of our numerous flourishing industries ; how their disappearance, one after the other, has reduced hundreds of thousands of our skilled artisans into hungry hordes of landless and workless labourers and menials (*cf. ante* p. 245).

"I am afraid it is not sufficiently realised in this province that by the grant of the proposed monopoly, the economic life and growth of the province will be strangled. We hear so much about the coming reforms, with the first instalment in the shape of provincial autonomy. But provincial autonomy, or any kind of autonomy, will be a meaningless phrase and a mockery if the economic resources of the provinces are mortgaged beforehand to a foreign concern.

"In the first instance, the concessions should be offered to an Indian company, but even if a joint industrial concern is to be started in India with both Indian and foreign capital, care should be taken that the majority of the directors consists of Indians. It is thus alone that the interest of indigenous chemical industries can be protected."—*The Tribune*, Sep. 3, and Nov. 3, 1934.

In this connection the growth of soda industry in America may be cited : "In 1881 works for the production of alkali by the ammonia process was established by the Solvay Process Company near Syracuse, N. Y. As a result of protection afforded by import duties, "American alkali manufacture increased by enormous strides, and not only completely divorced the United States from dependence upon English

alkali, but lost this country as an export market for the coarser sodium salts of English manufacture".—*Modern Soaps, Candles and Glycerin* by Leebert Lloyd Lamboon, pp. 3-4.

As a further instance of the intense selfishness which has all along characterised England's dealings with India, the Indo-Burma financial adjustment may be cited. Recently in the Legislative Assembly (March 26, 1935) a censure motion was passed by a large majority for failure of the Government to represent India's case before the tribunal set up in connection with the financial adjustment between India and Burma in the event of separation of the latter. Mr. B. Das observed that the debt share, payable to India was Rs. 100 crores while according to Sir George Schuster it was Rs. 70 crores. The fact of the matter was, said he, that Britishers wanted Burma to become their colony for exploitation, and wished India to pay for it. Speaking on behalf of the Congress Party, Mr. Das declared that they had no confidence in the Tribunal, more especially as the inclusion of Rowlatt was an insult to India, and also it was an insult that India did not possess financiers and economists, who could sit on the Tribunal. He demanded the Tribunal to be presided over by a Member of the League of Nations and that there should be no Britisher on it. On March 28, Sir James Grigg announced apologetically that the Tribunal had actually signed the Report!

It is not possible to overlook the financial aspects of Indo-Burma relationship. The conquest and annexation of Burma in 1886-87 was planned and achieved with a view to facilitate the exploitation of mineral and other resources of the country and to strengthen imperialist expansion in the East. Indians had, however, the privilege to pay the cost, not merely of war but also of the deficit in civil administrative charges in Burma for 15 years and more after the annexation. It is obvious that the wars waged in Burma had no relation to the requirements of Indian defence and were dictated exclusively by reasons of British policy. Nor can it be denied that the commercial advantages, including mining and other concessions in the annexed territories of Burma, were passed on

almost entirely to Britishers who have benefited the most by the control of petroleum, timber and rice of Burma, not to mention the ancillary credit and transport agencies. Mr. K. T. Shah has calculated in his annexure to the Report of the Congress Committee on the Financial Obligation between Great Britain and India that the aggregate claim of India on account of Burma would amount to nearly Rs. 100 crores made up of the following items :

	Crores Rs.
Cost of Burmese Wars from 1823-87 ...	18
Deficits in administration from 1886-7 made good out of Indian revenues ...	15
Pro-rata charges on Burma for 45 years' defences at Rs. 1 crore per annum ...	45
Pro-rata charges for the economic development of Burma, including interest on Burmese railways ...	22
<b>TOTAL</b> ...	<b>100</b>

The cost of the Burmese wars and the deficits in Burma's ordinary expenditure should not, in justice and equity, have been cast upon the Indian exchequer (*cf. ante* p. 170).

The underlying principle is that India is a "possession" and therefore any liberty may be taken with her finances and any wrong may be inflicted on her; and poor India's voice or cries must go unheard. Burma was annexed purely for imperial aggrandizement—for exploitation of her mineral wealth and timber. But India must bear the burden while her most urgent and crying needs *e.g.*, sanitation, removal of illiteracy, help to struggling industries and so on must be neglected.

## II—DRAIN OF THE MINERAL WEALTH OF THE COUNTRY—AN ECONOMIC LOSS BEYOND HER POWERS OF RECUPERATION.

Retired consuls and pro-consuls are often directors, and members of the government, shareholders. The representatives

of the companies floated in England come provided with introductions from influential personages and the object of their benevolent mission is discussed at the dinner table and the preliminaries settled then and there without reference to the Assembly whereas the poor Indian competitor in the field has to dance attendance at the ante-chambers and gets but scant consideration, not to speak of encouragement and state help.

The reader may be reminded that the late Lord Birkenhead resigned his post in the Cabinet as Secretary of State for India and joined the I.C.I.; Lord Reading, ex-Viceroy of India, also has, I believe, interests in it. How men in high position who have eaten the salt of India betray their trust and help the growth of the industry of their own nationals may be exemplified by the incident noted below which has been narrated by a well informed correspondent in a daily (January 17, 1935):

"The British always pride themselves on 'playing the game', but unfortunately where subject-peoples are concerned when they 'play the game,' it is only according to the rules laid down by themselves and with the dice heavily loaded against their opponents. . . . It is argued by British interests that they have established themselves in this country without any favour from the Government and without any privileges owing to their being members of the ruling race, although on other occasions they contend that British rule in India is not exactly a matter of philanthropy and that it is quite natural that Britishers should benefit economically owing to the political connection of their country with this. As regards shipping, it is interesting to note how the British shipping interests first established themselves. Martineau in his *Life of Sir Bartle Frere* describing the meeting of Mr. Mackinnon, the founder of the British India Steam Navigation Company, with Sir Bartle Frere states as follows:

Mackinnon had gone out to India from Glasgow a few years previously, a young man, and with slender means, to take up a business in partnership with a friend who had preceded him to India. After a time they had come to own two steamers of six hundred tons each, trading from Calcutta to Burmah; more steamers were acquired, and the concern became the 'Burmah British Navigation Company.'

Mackinnon had larger schemes in view, for which he needed a Government subsidy; but Calcutta officials in those days were not very accessible to the outside mercantile world, and it was

not till early in 1862, shortly before Frere left Calcutta, that a friend took him to one of Frere's semi-public breakfasts, and he was able to get a hearing from some one who could help him. He proposed, if a subsidy were granted to him, to establish a line of coasting steamers, calling at all ports of the coast from Calcutta round to Kurrachee. Frere, with his quick eye for a man of mettle, gave him and his proposal a cordial reception. 'You are the man I have been looking for, for years,' he said to him; and he took him to Lord Canning who gave favourable attention to his scheme. But the consent of the Bombay Government was also necessary, and this Mackinnon was unable to obtain till Frere went to Bombay as Governor in April, 1863. There he was the first person with whom Frere had an interview after being sworn in, and the result was that the subsidy soon after was granted. The 'Burma Steam Navigation Company' became the British India Company, and in time the steamers extended their trips to the Persian Gulf, to the East African Coast, to England and to Australia.

This great company took its first impulse—so said Sir William Mackinnon—from the encouragement given by Frere to a young and unknown man at his breakfast table in Chowringhee Road.

"It should be mentioned that at this time there were in Bombay alone four shipping companies registered as joint-stock companies apart from private ship-owners. But the Government method of giving subsidies out of Indian revenues at the time seemed to be at breakfast tables of high European officials where Indians could have no access just as to-day questions of economic interest vital to India are decided at Government House luncheons and club dinners"—(*cf.* Vol. I. pp. 347-60).

The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce, sitting at Delhi (March 30, 1935), has adopted among others the following resolution :

"The third resolution, moved by Mr. Manu Subedar, characterised the safeguards in the new constitution as unduly rigid and that the provisions against discrimination were of such comprehensive and sweeping character as were likely to cause abuse of power to the serious detriment of the country's industrial and commercial development. The proposals regarding shipping are completely retrograde and well-calculated as a bar for ever to the development of Indian mercantile marine.

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After all, India is progressing and waking up and if her sons to-day are unable to work her own mines, their children

or children's children will be able to do so. If in the meantime all the mining rights and concessions in Burma, and Assam (Digboi) and other provinces of India proper are leased out to foreign exploiters nothing will be left for future generations. The late Mr. Gokhale often used to tell the present writer that the greatest injury which the British Government is inflicting upon this unhappy land—an injury which is beyond her powers of recuperation—is the slow but continuous exhaustion of her mineral wealth. As the statesman put this point with great clearness:

"In the case of the mining industry, for instance, it (*i.e.*, the development of the country's resources by English capital) means not merely that the children of the soil must be content for the time being with the hired labourer's share of the wealth extracted, but that the exportation of the remainder involves a loss which can never be repaired. Though the blame largely rests with them, we can well understand the jealousy with which the people of the country regard the exhaustion, mainly for the benefit of the foreign capitalist, of wealth which can never, as in the case of agriculture, be reproduced. It is, in short, no mere foolish delusion, but an unquestionable economic truth, that every ounce of gold that leaves the country, so far as it is represented by no such return, implies permanent loss.

"The exploitation of the mineral resources of the country by the foreign capitalist stand on a different footing; for in this case the wealth extracted is not reproduced, and, on the not unreasonable assumption that it would sooner or later have been exploited with Indian capital, may unquestionably be said to deprive the people of the country, for all time, of a corresponding opportunity of profit."—G. V. Joshi's *Writings and Speeches*", pp. 954-55.

The future historian of India will have to write a dismal chapter indicating that when her people at last woke up they found all the wealth in the bowels of the earth carried away by foreign exploiters and only empty dark caverns and subterranean vaults and passages left behind. The Indian people have absolutely no voice in the matter of the disposal of her mineral resources.

### III—INDIA *vs.* PERSIA IN THE DISPOSAL OF MINERAL WEALTH.

Let us now for a moment turn our attention to the history of the acquisition of the mineral wealth of a "Sovereign State"



—Persia. By a series of diplomatic understandings it was agreed between Russia and England that each will be given a free hand for the forwarding of their policy of aggression and assimilation in Persia. Ultimately it was agreed that Russia would have her "sphere of influence" in the north and England in the south in the littoral, the oil fields on the coast of the Persian gulf. By the Anglo-Russian condominium in Persia her sovereignty was nominally guaranteed, but Russia was all the same given a free hand to pursue her filibustering designs and make any constitutional government an impossibility.<sup>1</sup> Fortunately for Persia's political entity, the Great War intervened (1914-18). The Soviet Government "presented the Persians with an amazing document paralleling their offer to China, at about the same time. It provided diplomatic relations, restoration of certain territory to Persia, annulment of all previous Russian concessions, . . . . . and cancellation of all the Persian debt to Russia. No negotiations were necessary to induce Persia to sign it. Even the important British oil concessions in the south-west were left unimpaired—perhaps discreetly."

Now that Persia is free to negotiate on her own terms it is interesting to note what modifications she has exacted for the renewal of the D'Arcy concession. A well-informed correspondent writes :

"Now let us analyse some of the important points of the new agreement. The first point gained from the Persian national point of view is that all workmen and technicians 'must' be Persians. The Company will pay an annual sum of £10,000 for the training of Persian students in Europe in oil technology. The selection of students will be made by the Persian Government. The usual stock-in-trade of the exploiting companies in the East, that the Easterners have not the executive ability or cannot be trained quickly, did not do.

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<sup>1</sup> The reader who wishes to know the details may consult Shuster's *The Strangling of Persia*, ed. 1920.

"The Persian Government is entitled to inspect all operations of the Company in Persia, all plans and all technical undertakings. No hide and seek business will be tolerated. The Persian Government will choose a representative, resident in London, who will be entitled to any inside information. It will be recalled, that the former Persian representatives in London were not allowed to inspect the books of the Company in the London Head Office, when discrepancies arose.

"The original concession to D'Arcy was for about 400,000 square miles. In the new agreement the area is limited to 200,000 square miles until 1938, when the area will be further reduced to 100,000 square miles. That is, in another five years the Persian Government themselves will be exploiting a large portion of the original D'Arcy concession."

A national government not only modifies the concession in its favour but takes good care to see that its own people may be so trained that in course of time they themselves may work the mineral resources, but in India the foreign exploiter not only seizes them without consulting the people's representatives but takes good care that the children of the soil may be kept ignorant of oil technology.

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## CHAPTER XXIII.

THE BENGAL CHEMICAL AND PHARMACEUTICAL WORKS LTD.—  
A PAGE FROM THE DIARY OF 1893-94—DANGER AHEAD—  
BENGALIS AND INDIANS IN GENERAL IN BUSINESS—CAUSES  
OF THEIR BACKWARDNESS AND FAILURES.

"If there is anything certain in human affairs, it is that valuable acquisitions are only to be retained by the continuation of the same energies which gained them. In the inevitable changes of human affairs, new inconveniences and dangers continually grow up which must be countered by new resources and contrivances. Whatever qualities, therefore, in a government tend to encourage activity, energy, courage, originality, are requisites of Permanence as well as of Progress."  
—JOHN STUART MILL.

I now proceed to make further observations about the Bengal Chemical and Pharmaceutical Works Ltd. The younger generation of the present day expresses surprise and admiration at the progress of this concern. It seems to think that God Almighty one day called in aid the Divine Architect (Viswakarma) to construct a full panoplied works with its multifarious branches and let it down to this nether world by means of a golden chain—and Lo! there was the Bengal Chemical. People fail to realise that in this world of ours everything of solid worth is of silent, imperceptible growth of years of patient labour. Rome was not built in a day and was not born of the furor of momentary outburst. The vulgar estimate of a pyramid or of a temple at Madura in Southern India or of the rock-cut cave in Ajanta is that by some supernatural agency it rose all at once like the Prophet's gourd. I saw with wonder and admiration an exquisite figure of Siva in dancing (Nataraja) chiselled out of an entire piece of ruby at the temple of Chidambaram (Madras) as also a fragment of a statue by the hand of Phidias at the Louvre (Paris). Nor need I refer to that dream in marble—the Tajmahal. When we are lost in raptures over these master-

pieces we are apt to forget that each of these took years of ungrudging and patient toil before it attained to fruition.

I shall now narrate the experiences of a single day in 1893-94 (*cf.* Vol. I. Ch. VII). My friend Amulya Charan had secured an order for 100 lbs. of Aitken's Syrup from a brother Anglo-Indian practitioner, who used it as an ingredient for his patented 'blood-mixture'. This was the largest quantity of this preparation ever on requisition. I was overjoyed. I had in stock the concentrated liquors (Vol. I, pp. 108-9). But the difficulty was in getting two maunds of sugar for making syrup. In those days whatever myself and Amulya Charan could spare was ear-marked at the beginning of the month for the materials to be purchased in anticipation, and my expenses for "household" were met out of the sales of the preparations from day to day. It was by no means an uncommon occurrence to wait in the morning till the sale of a single phial of Aqua Ptychotis for the daily kitchen requirements. But the price of two maunds of sugar had not been anticipated. It so happened that my younger brother, who was an unpaid bazar sarkar (bill-collector and stores purchaser) had repeatedly called at the pharmacy of Dr. R. G. Kar at Shambazar two miles north of the premises for payment of a bill. The manager of the drug-store, feeling uncomfortable, had promised to clear off the next time he called. My brother was under the necessity of going on foot to Shambazar and thence to Burrabazar sugar depot (at least three miles off) and back again to our premises so that the syrup would be ready by the time I returned from the college. As this was a hot summer's day I felt the distance to be covered would be too much for a pedestrian journey all along. I, therefore, advised him to perform a part of the outward journey by availing of the tram car. But here a fresh difficulty arose. The fare was five pice; but only one anna could be scraped together and there was a deficit of one pice, which somehow or other was procured. To the present incumbents of the concern, who have more than half-a-dozen motor cars constantly plying, who command the services of

some 2,500 hands not to speak of the phone, such a contingency is unbelievable. I append here an advertisement drawn up by me from the widely circulated vernacular paper of those times, *The Sanjivani* (Nov. 3, 1894).

"Bengal Chemical and Pharmaceutical Works, 91, Upper Circular Road, Calcutta. With the help of Dr. Prafulla Chandra Rây, D.Sc. (Edin.) and the well-known medical practitioner Dr. Amulya Charan Bose, M.B., in this allopathic manufacturing concern some three hundred medicines have been prepared and are for sale. Our preparations are made according to the latest scientific methods. Price list on application. The name of only one is given below :

*"Syrup of Hypophosphite of Lime* for colds, coughs, catarrh, asthma, phthisis, bronchitis and other lungs-diseases : a never-failing remedy. It is sweet and agreeable to the taste and of beautiful rose colour. Trial of last two years has proved that because it is freshly prepared, its efficacy is superior to that of the imported article. The leading physicians of Calcutta are prescribing it."

My experience in connection with the Bengal Chemical and Pharmaceutical Works and other concerns gathered in the course of the last forty-two years entitles me to speak on the business capacities of the Bengalis in particular and also of the Indians in general. Elsewhere I have dwelt at length on the dismal and hopeless failure of the Bengalis in this line, especially of the college educated youths (Vol. I. p. 440). But this disease or incapacity is inherent in the Bengalis and hereditary. As I cast my eyes around I find several business houses built by the ability, activity and energy of a man of rare type almost crumbling to pieces, due to the stupidity and inertness and ignorance of his successors. The father, or founder was a man of uncommon type ; he worked hard, did not spare himself and was not given to luxurious habits. He is anxious that his son should be "educated"; he sends him to college and brings him up as a "gentleman". The latter is not slow to imbibe habits of refinement which often means the ways of the idle rich. Nay, the father has a touch of pride

in him. He does not like that his son should be known in society as born of a grocer or tailor or cloth-dealer or jute merchant or a stevedore and so on.<sup>1</sup> Another defect in our national character is that the successful businessman wants to gather as much profit out of his concern as he can, with the result that he often undermines his health by overwork and denial of rest. His assistants—not only clerks but his agents in distant parts—are ill-paid. As long as the founder of the business is in good health and wide awake, matters go on favourably and prosperously. When, however, his health is impaired, he can not keep his eye on and has to depend on his assistants. The latter, generally poorly remunerated, seize the opportunity to line their pockets and when the “boss” closes his eye they rob right and left. His sons have been brought up in ignorance of business, have been taught only to live an easy life and to draw upon the profits of the concerns. Thus they are absolutely at the mercy of those who conduct their affairs. The business gradually goes to rack and ruin. A great drawback in our national character is that as soon as the founder of the concern dies, his sons or successors quarrel among themselves as to who should manage it; if one of the latter manages it for a time, his conduct is often not above suspicion. In a short time amidst bickerings and mutual distrust the business collapses.

On the Bombay side although they are far more efficient in business even there is a saying that in the hands of the third generation the business languishes or fails. The second generation often mismanages it but can live on credit and assets and thus anyhow staves off the evil day. My remarks so far do not apply to the Marwaris and Bhatias (Guzratīs of

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. “Old Jolyon looked at him. To-morrow he was going to that great place [Eton] where they turned out Prime Ministers and bishops and that, where they taught manners—at least he hoped so—and how to despise trade. H’m! Would the boy learn to despise his own father? And suddenly there welled up in old Jolyon all his primeval honesty, and that peculiar independence which made him respected among men, and a little feared.”—Galsworthy: *On Forsyte 'Change*.

Burrabazar) ; their sons are early trained in the fathers' business, the latter not being college-educated take to it readily as fish to water and it is carried on successfully from generation to generation. This is still more applicable to the Boras and the Memons of Cutch who have for generations the hereditary instinct for trade in them; but unfortunately they are often illiterate—of course they know the 3 R's ; but thus far and no further. They are often millionaires but, as I have said elsewhere, of narrow outlook (*cf.* Vol. I. p. 452). The Bhatias, the Boras and Memons of Cutch have business operations throughout India, also in Hongkong, Shanghai, Kobe, Kyoto and in East Africa. Then there are the Sindhies of Hyderabad, who have not only spread over the above parts but often have branches in Paris and even in New York. The Parsis, and following in their wake the Gujratis (generally of the Bania caste) are more or less cultured and educated as in the case of the Tatas, Jamshedjees, Jecjebhoys, Camas, Wadias, Goculdas Tejpalas, Thakersays, Purshotomdas Thakurdases and others.

The founders of big British Houses in Calcutta, Bombay, Cawnpore, etc., are seldom college-educated. But all the same being well grounded in the secondary education they manage to pick up all that counts for education *pari passu* with their colossal expansion of business as is evidenced in the case of a Mackay (Lord Inchcape), a Cable, a Yule, a Mackinnon and most others too numerous to mention. The continuity of the British firms is kept up because, I suppose, the chief has always his eye on his subordinates. His discerning eye picks up the most efficient and businesslike among them ; he slowly promotes them and entrusts them with responsibility and ultimately takes them into partnership. Thus the President of the Chamber of Commerce, or of the Trade Association, is equally at home in business as also in the intricacies of the stock exchange and currency problems.

With these premises I now commence to say something about the future of the Bengal Chemical. Somehow or other by a happy concurrence of fortuitous circumstances it has

reached its present prosperous condition. Mr. Rajshekhar Bose, who has been a happy catch and who has been connected with it ever since it became a limited liability concern (1903), is a man of exceptional abilities. When he joined it he was a brand-new recruit with only bookish knowledge of an average M.A. in chemistry. He knew nothing of accounts and book-keeping and other important things in business matters, nor had he any knowledge of the world. But somehow or other gradually with its expansion, by a method of trial and error he fought his way upwards. He has a rare combination of the most conflicting qualifications—equally at home with the ledger and dealings with customer; an expert in chemical processes as also in chemical engineering and technology; also in devising designs for labels and in the modern art of advertising. Nor need I refer to the high position he occupies in Bengali literature. Mr. Bose has been lucky also in gathering round him a group of earnest, energetic and patriotic helpers and workers of strict probity; so far so good. But somehow or other I am not so optimistic about the future. Mr. Bose on account of his failing health has been compelled to retire, retaining his connections with the firm only in an advisory capacity. No doubt all along good care has been taken to create a line of successors and departmental heads. But here the inherent defects of the Indian hereditary character come into prominence. The Anglo-Saxon has been for centuries a seafaring, exploring, colonising as also a mercantile race. He delights in adventures and in courting dangers. Initial failures do not daunt him but only bring out his grit and resourcefulness. The result is that in every sphere of life and activity men of the right stamp are always available. When a successful man of business wishes to retire, he has only to advertise in the market, mentioning the assets and it may be the liabilities as also the good will, and the right sort of individual purchaser will offer favourable terms.

There is another difficulty. An export or import business, or jute or cotton mill is of a stereotyped nature and is run on in the same groove. Hence experts and managers to carry it



on may be always found. Not so a chemical and pharmaceutical industry like ours, with its diversified ramifications ; it is ever expanding its branches in the different provinces, it has now to encounter fierce competition from abroad including Japan. The biological and biochemical departments (including the serum and vaccine sections) have to be thoroughly up to date and *en courant* with the latest researches, which means that some of the experts have to be sent abroad almost every other year to pick up the latest improvements. This applies equally to the purely chemical and pharmaceutical sides. We cannot afford to rest on oars, for that means stagnation and death. The very essence of our business lies in continuous progress.

At present, as I have said above a band of enthusiastic workers, whole-heartedly devoted to the cause as also an enlightened directorate fully alive to the requirements of the case, have been luckily secured but unfortunately they have the failings and defects of their race and often fail to rise superior to them; and there is no knowing that such a happy combination will be ever forthcoming—or such recruits to fill up the vacancies in future.

There is another danger ahead about which I have to speak with hesitation. The Bengal Chemical is in some respects in advance of the average intelligence and enlightenment of our country. At the general meeting of the shareholders, although for years past, inspite of the trade depression and slump a dividend of 15% has been declared, some of the members raised a note of dissent to the effect that a bigger dividend or a bonus over the shares should be given as there is carried over a large reserve fund. They do not see or fail to see that this large reserve is only *on paper*, as a good part of it is actually used up in the expansion of the business *i.e.*, as working capital and unless it is so utilised fresh capital will be necessary and that will only redound to the reduction of the dividend. Moreover, there is the danger of over-capitalisation, for there are ups and downs in every undertaking and in bad season this tells heavily ; but human nature specially in India

is short-sighted. People seldom look ahead or take long-range views; they are more concerned with immediate gains or interests. Two thousand years ago Æsop sounded the note of warning in his fable of the goose which used to lay golden eggs. Fortunately, the short-sighted shareholders are in the minority: but in future such men by canvassing may secure a majority, for it is comparatively an easy matter to appeal to the sordid instincts and cupidity of mankind. Like the Praetorian guards of Rome, who held the empire to auction to the highest bidder, they may be instruments of ruin to the concern.

The Bengali has been lacking in business instincts for generations past and it is humanly speaking impossible to bring about a sudden change in his mentality and angle of vision. Even if he is compelled to take to commercial and industrial undertakings he must go through the probationary period and encounter and face every sort of initial difficulty. But as I have said elsewhere he is for quick results and returns, and the qualities which go to the making of success in this line are against his grain.

I cannot conclude this chapter better than by quoting some portions of *The Perfectionist Experiment at Oneida Creek* even at the risk of laying myself open to the charge of being considered an egotist:

"In 1848 the Oneida Community was founded in America to carry out a resolution arrived at by a handful of Perfectionist Communists 'that we will devote ourselves exclusively to the establishment of the Kingdom of God.' Though the American nation declared that this sort of thing was not to be tolerated in a Christian country, the Oneida Community held its own for over thirty years, during which period it seems to have produced healthier children and done and suffered less evil than any Joint Stock Company on record. It was, however, a highly selected community; for a genuine communist (roughly definable as an intensely proud person who proposes to enrich the common fund instead of to sponge on it) is superior to an ordinary joint stock capitalist precisely as an ordinary joint

stock capitalist is superior to a pirate. Further, the Perfectionists were mightily shepherded by their chief Noyes, one of those chance attempts at the Superman which occur from time to time in spite of the interference of Man's blundering institutions.

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"But an experiment conducted by a handful of people, who, after thirty years of immunity from the unintentional child slaughter that goes on by ignorant parents in private homes, numbered only 300, could do very little.

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"Yet their Superman himself admitted that this apparent success was only part of the abnormal phenomenon of his own occurrence ; for when he came to the end of his powers through age, he himself guided and organized the voluntary relapse of the communists into marriage, capitalism, and customary private life, thus admitting that the real social solution was not what a casual Superman could persuade a picked company to do for him, but what a whole community of Supermen would do spontaneously. If Noyes had had to organize, not a few dozen Perfectionists, but the whole United States, America would have beaten him as completely as England beat Oliver Cromwell, France Napoleon, or Rome Julius Caesar. Cromwell learnt by bitter experience that God himself cannot raise a people above its own level.

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"Until the heart and mind of the people is changed the very greatest man will no more dare to govern on the assumption that all are as great as he than a drover dare leave his flock to find its way through the streets as he himself would."<sup>a</sup>

Another serious defect in our national character and upbringing is that the founder of the business packs it with his sons, nephews or sons-in-law without previous apprenticeship and without taking into consideration their merits places them

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<sup>a</sup> *Man and Superman* by Bernard Shaw.

over the heads of subordinates who have served the firm for years. This sort of nepotism naturally creates ill-feeling and jealousy and the former is thus deprived of the loyal co-operation of the latter.

I have before me *The House of Mitsui, a Record of Three Centuries: Past History and Present Enterprises* (Tokyo, 1933). It is a most remarkable record in the world's history of industrial progress—unique of its kind. I make some extracts from it to show that the original founder and his descendants have taken early precautions in avoiding the reefs and shoals which beset the path of successful continuation of business:

"The power of the House to survive the vicissitudes of two centuries and emerge with the ability to take full advantage of the opportunities of the new age was due in a great measure to the wisdom with which Hachirobei had organised it.

"On the basis of Hachirobei's will the constitution for the family and firm was framed. It has been modified to meet the needs of changing times, but the spirit of the inherited family code remains the essential core of the constitution, which to-day governs the Mitsui family and firm with its worldwide interests, and the Omotokata, the central administrative body, has become the incorporated Mitsui Gomei Kaisha, the Mitsui Partnership Company. Its partners are the heads of the eleven Mitsui families and no others, and its directors are chosen by them. Its functions to-day may be concisely described in modern terminology as those of a holding company. In the Gomei Kaisha all the far-flung cords of the Mitsui enterprises—banking, trading, mining, trust and insurance business, shipping and shipbuilding, warehouses, etc.—come to a common centre under the united control of the eleven families. At their head is the direct descendant of Hachirobei, the head of the main family.

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"Thrift enriches the house, while luxury ruins a man. Practise the former but avoid the latter. Thus lay a lasting foundation for the prosperity and perpetuation of our House.

"The essential of a business enterprise is to employ men of great abilities and take advantage of their special talents. Replace those who are aged and decrepit with young men of promise.

"Make your sons begin with the mean tasks of the apprentice, and, when they have gradually learned the secrets of the business, let them take a post in the branch houses to practise their knowledge.

"Sound judgment is essential in all things, especially in business enterprises.

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"A profit-sharing scheme gave certain responsible classes of employees a direct interest in the prosperity of the firm.

"Chonin Koken-roku," by Mitsui Takafusa (1684-1748), is a record of his father's personal observations of the vicissitudes of big merchant families in Kyoto and Osaka, with the theme that great fortunes will develop the symptoms of decline when they are inherited by the third generation, which knows little or nothing about their making.

"On occasions of natural calamities, whether famines, conflagrations or plagues, the Mitsuis have been among the foremost in providing funds and organizing relief.

"In 1934 three million yen were given to the nation for the relief of distress during the trade depression. In November, 1933, as these pages are going to press, it is announced that the Mitsui family has decided to devote thirty million yen to the establishment of a foundation for the promotion of public welfare and national progress. The foundation proposes either to conduct or subsidise scientific research, technical experiment, cultural institutions, social welfare work in cities and enterprises intended to promote the well-being of agricultural and fishing communities."

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## CHAPTER XXIV.

### VERDICT OF HISTORY—CONCLUSION.

"Suffer no man and no cause to escape the undying penalty which history has the power to inflict on the wrong"—LORD ACTON.

In the preceding pages I have tried to present my readers with a brief survey of India in the educational, economic and social spheres and lest I may be thought partial I have fortified myself by quoting the opinions of English writers competent to speak on the subject. In short, the present volume and its predecessor may be taken as a compendium of India under British rule.

It will be seen that there is no such thing as a policy underlying the administration—it lives from hand to mouth—any how balancing the budget—and in this the local Governments are vying with the Imperial with the result that the back of the peasant, who after all is the chief sufferer and who in the long run pays the piper, is broken. Thus while, on the one hand the burden of the Imperial taxation which makes even the daily necessities of life costlier as it imposes crushing indirect taxation in the shape of import duties on cloth, sugar, salt, kerosene as also enhanced railway fares, postage stamps, etc., is getting heavier, on the other hand the provincial Government's demands have been persistent and ever-increasing. It does not hesitate to squeeze as much as it can out of the luckless starving people. Over and above these items, the poor long suffering ryot has to bear local rates as well, e.g. chowkidary (village watchman) and ferry rates and road cess (the ultimate burden of the latter falls on his shoulders). Under the New Reforms (Montagu-Chelmsford) Bengal has suffered most, with the result that her education, sanitation and various other nation-building projects have been kept in abeyance.

Bengal which played the leading part in the foundation of the British power—which supplied millions and billions of crores to the coffers—which even now contributes the largest

amount to the exchequer—is the chief sufferer as has been shewn.<sup>1</sup> She has been particularly penalised; some of her richest and most salubrious slices of territory have been torn from her and added to Behar and Assam and she has been left to stew in her own juice as best she can. Hers has been a cruel fate. The most malarious and populous province in India has got all the paraphernalia of a gorgeous administration with the pay of the executive councillors and ministers, outstripping all other provinces as befitting her “premier” position. But she has got the least amount to her share for education, sanitation, irrigation—in fact, for all the nation-building departments.<sup>2</sup>

Again it has become almost customary with the British writers to claim all the credit for the introduction of Western education in India. Even such a pro-Indian administrator as Sir Henry Cotton coolly and condescendingly remarks not without conscious pride: “The people of the country enlightened and educated by ourselves. . . .” (Preface to *New India*—1886). I have attempted to prove that this assertion or claim, is, at best problematical—the initiative and stimulus for Western education was due to Ram Mohan Roy (ante p. 12 *et seq.*). Even at the present day *i.e.*, after the lapse of a century and three quarters, the main burden of secondary, college and post-graduate education is borne by the people themselves.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Vol. I. pp. 428-39.

<sup>2</sup> The following quotation from the *Statesman's Year Book* for 1934 will show, at a glance, Bengal's sad plight as compared to some other major provinces.

Province.	Population.	Revenue.	Expenditure.
Madras ... ..	47,193,602	16,45,01,000	15,82,24,000
Bombay ... ..	26,398,997	14,92,73,000	15,10,74,000
<b>Bengal ... ..</b>	<b>51,087,338</b>	<b>9,42,73,000</b>	<b>10,82,21,000</b>
Punjab ... ..	24,018,639	10,49,32,000	10,13,97,000

<sup>3</sup> Rai Harendra Nath Choudhury in his brochure, *The New Menace* which is expected to be out in a few days shows that “the Bengal authorities contribute only 16 per cent. of the cost of secondary education; while in Madras it is 23 and in U. P. 51 per cent” (pp. 8-9). Also, at the Annual Convocation held on March 2, 1935, the Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University, in the course of his address, points out that

In these days of rapid transport and transmission of news you can no more keep out the exchange and traffic in the latest social, economic and political trend of thoughts in the west than arrest the progress of the trade winds. In fact, "in the traffic of ideas it is no longer possible for any one of us to live for himself alone, but all nations are members, one of another." All the Sovereign States in the near and far East—in Turkey, Persia, China and Japan—are in a state of ferment. In Japan the awakening began in the late sixties and early seventies. What marvellous progress has been achieved in the land of the rising sun need not be recounted here ; some references to it have been incidentally made in the proper places.

When one feels tempted to contrast the fate of India with those of the above-named countries he is filled with gloomy despair. Our forebears had high hopes of the destiny of our land ; she was the first to be brought under the direct sway of the most progressive country in the world—the country of Shakespeare and Milton, of Cromwell and Hampden, of Bacon and Newton, of Burke and Wilberforce. When I was a child in the lap of my mother I was fed with anecdotes of Queen Victoria who was represented as the very fountain of beneficence, how under her benign rule India would be raised once more to her pristine glory. But alas, as time wore on, the spell was broken and all the bright expectations have been one by one dashed to the ground. Disillusionment has come.

The part which India played during the Great War has already been hinted at (Vol. I, p. 232). As I am giving the finishing touch to this last and concluding volume I have before me *War Memoirs of David Lloyd George*. In the volume devoted to 1917 I come across some remarkable passages :

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about Rs. 27 lakhs represented the income of the University out of which Rs. 18,65,000 or a little more than 69 per cent. represented the income from fees and other sources, Rs. 3,65,000 or nearly 14 per cent. was derived from interest on endowment, and Rs. 4,68,000 or about 17 per cent. received from the Government.



"Before the end of October, 1916, the Dominions had raised 673,808 men for the service of the Empire in the War. India brought this figure to well over a million. Had it not been for the readiness with which Dominion and Dependency sprang to our aid in the lean years of 1914-1915, the Allies would have been hard put to it to pull through before Italy came in, and at a time when the forces at the disposal of the Central Powers were at their best.

"The Indians helped us to defend the waterlogged trenches of Flanders through the miserable winter of 1914-1915 and contributed to our victories in Mesopotamia.

"In noting the amount of care and caution bestowed on the question of Indian representation at this gathering, it must be borne in mind that hitherto India had not participated in the Imperial Conferences. . . . India not being a self-governing Dominion, was at that time outside the purview of the Conference Constitution. . . . There was, therefore, no authority by which India could be invited to an Imperial Conference, and no understanding with the Dominion Premiers to permit of such a new development. But India had made a large contribution of men and money to the carrying on of the War, and her troops were fighting alongside white soldiers and against white enemies. This fact had created a new self-consciousness among the Indians that showed itself in a demand for greater recognition, and it also made consultation with them about the further conduct of the War just and desirable. Hence the Imperial Conference of 1917 was summoned on a special basis, outside the official constitution. The representation of India in the Imperial War Cabinet was the beginning of the open recognition of India's new status. The precedent was followed in the conferences and discussions of 1919 regarding the peace settlement, and since then India has had her place in every Imperial Conference. The two Imperial Conferences of 1923—the regular Quadrennial Conference and the special Imperial Economic Conference—found India's representatives at the table alongside the Dominion Premiers."

Lord Willingdon, who was then Governor of Bombay, wrote to Mr. Lloyd George dated 22nd January, 1916.

"The Indian's point of view is 'you English have educated us. You have brought us to an intense desire to look after ourselves: when you want us you call us fellow citizens of a Great Empire, but when it comes to business you give us nothing but "concessions." We love our country, we want you to give us a real chance of doing something for it.'

"The Englishman replies: 'You are not ready for any more. We must have efficiency in our administration, and you can't come in

and really help us administer until you can show more character and honesty.'

"But the Englishman will not realise that the Indian can't learn unless he is given a chance to do so. Of course, it is true that the advance of the Indian means *the gradual disappearance of this great Civil Service out here*, but that, if the Indians are given a real chance to progress, is inevitable. I only write this outline of view to ask you to keep in mind this great country after the War is over. India has done her part nobly during the War, and while she asks for nothing because of that, I think she deserves to be generously treated. It is such an opportunity for a statesman to bind, I believe for long years, this great people in the bonds of amity and Imperial Unity that I hope you may remember this outburst, for the question is one of real Imperial concern."

In a second letter, dated Bombay 10th December, 1916, Lord Willingdon pathetically pleads for India.

"It is, I know, impossible for you to have much time to consider the future policy of this country, but I do trust that you will call to mind a letter I wrote to you many months ago suggesting that our policy should be conceived in a really generous spirit, for India has done, is doing, and will continue to do her part. It is, I am certain, a magnificent opportunity for securing the faithful loyalty of India for all time, to give her substantial advance and to give it generously. We must run a certain amount of risk in so doing, but I believe the risk should be run and I am confident the result will be satisfactory."

Professor Ramsay Muir observes :

"In India the political agitation, which had been afoot before the War, was stilled; and forces far greater than India had ever before put into the field saw service in France, in Palestine, in Mesopotamia, and in China. . . . Moreover, India could not but feel that, having played so great a part in the war, her claim was greatly strengthened not only to be consulted through the British officials who conducted the government, *but to be recognised as a distinct community, and to be endowed with the autonomous rights which other parts of the Empire enjoyed*. Thus the war directly quickened the nationalist movement both in India and in other parts of the Empire.

"In the Peace Conference, delegations from the Dominions and from India were present, not merely as elements in a British Empire delegation, but in their own right; and they signed the Treaties as independent powers. When the League of Nations was constituted, the Dominions

and India appeared again,<sup>1</sup> though in a somewhat modified way: the British Empire as a unit became a permanent member of the council; but Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and India became members of the Assembly as distinct powers.

"Thus the war, which displayed so powerful a loyalty among the members of the Empire, has been followed by a very remarkable relaxation of the bonds which hold them together. The Dominions claim, and exercise without protest, the right of appointing ambassadors of their own to foreign powers: there are Canadian and Irish ministers at Washington. They claim, also, the right of negotiating treaties independently with foreign powers: South Africa has concluded such a treaty with Germany. Britain, on her side, has recognized this progressive disintegration of the Empire as political unit."

"The Dominions and India have shown no signs of readiness to depart from the policy of self-sufficiency which they have pursued, or to admit British goods which compete with their own products. The dependent empire owes its prosperity largely to the fact that it is able to trade freely with all countries, and other trading nations would resent any departure from this policy; moreover, many of these colonies, especially those under mandate from the League of Nations, are bound by treaty to give equal access to all traders. Even if these difficulties could be overcome, there are many who believe that if the British Empire were to turn itself into an exclusive fiscal unit, it would become a cause of friction and war instead of a cause of peace, and that the adoption of the policy of self-sufficiency and exclusion on this gigantic scale would be a disaster for the world; while there are others who believe that Britain herself cannot safely take the risk of sacrificing the two-thirds of her trade which is carried on with foreign countries in order to develop the one-third which is carried on with the rest of the Empire."—*The Political Consequences of the Great War*.

Thus India was by implication at least raised to the status of a Sovereign State—an equal partner in the British Empire

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<sup>1</sup> "Forty-five sovereign states were scheduled in the treaties as Original Members of the League." On this score India as a member of the League has been made to contribute the huge sum of Rs. 12 lakhs (approximately) annually since its entry into this envied position of a "Sovereign State." But here again British diplomacy steps in: India is *only a dependency tied to the wheels of the Imperial chariot*. The Indian representative is chosen not by the Assembly but by the Viceroy, or the Secretary of State for India and he is thus a creature ever ready to vote for his master! Thus England secures one additional vote at the expense of India.

and under the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms she was granted within certain limits fiscal autonomy so as to help her to build her own industries. But all these have turned out to be mere moonshine. The gushing outburst of gratitude soon began to evaporate and India was again made to realise that she was only a subordinate branch of the Empire. She was only made to pull the chestnut out of the fire. The Englishman has now a conveniently short memory ; he contrives to forget all past obligations, and as the immortal bard has it,

“—When he once attains the upmost round  
He then unto the ladder turns his back,  
Looks in the clouds, scorning the base degrees  
By which he did ascend.”

No wonder, India has been filled with disheartenment and frustration.

Mr. Ramsay Macdonald as seen elsewhere was so impatient that he would not wait years but in the course of a few months would grant India Dominion Status. But by and by the memories of statesmen began to be short and they racked their brains to wriggle out of a situation to which they had committed themselves in a moment of forgetfulness. Mr. Lloyd George was the first to reveal himself in his true colours. The great civil service, which according to Lord Willingdon, was to disappear as an anachronism, was to be given a fresh lease of life, as it was (according to Mr. Lloyd George of latter days) the “steel frame” of British rule. By a curious irony of fate Lord Willingdon who as Governor of Bombay was pleading for poor India now sat on the viceregal throne and he was naturally sent for for consultation during the Joint Parliamentary Report so that British statesmen should not be deprived of his valuable advice. As a result of the collective and concentrated wisdom of Westminster, India is going to be blessed with a constitution, which gives only the shadow of autonomy leaving the substance intact in the hands of the Britishers. Hypocrisy, thy name is statesmanship.

I have quoted just now Prof. Ramsay Muir, writing in 1930, but since then under the statute of Westminster, 1931,

the Dominions (*e.g.* Canada, the Irish Free State) can establish relations with foreign countries without reference to the colonial secretary and now the question is raised: "Is the British Empire dead?"

"The 'British Empire' is now only a time-worn phrase," says a well-known journalist in England, "and it does not as such exist now; actually the British Empire is dead.

"Australia has chosen for her first Governor-General an Australian and a Jew—the man who is still a commoner. He was chosen by the Australian people without reference to Whitehall.

"Now Canada has chosen its first commoner as the Governor-General—chosen by the people. This is symptomatic of the great changes that have taken place and are even now taking place.

"Only the Crown Colonies and the Indian Empire, as we still call it, are run from Whitehall."

In proportion as the bonds are loosened, the grip over India is tightened, and in the New Constitution eighty per cent. of the revenues in the central government (*i.e.* military and the railway budget, the civil service recruitment etc.) is non-votable and of the remaining ten per cent. the Viceroy by his power of certification is the absolute master. In this way the economic and political bondage of India is to be perpetuated and the numerous safeguards and reserved powers in the hands of the Viceroy cut at the very root of autonomy and make India forever safe for exploitation by British manufacturers and check the natural expansion of Indian industry and commerce. It constitutes in fact the severest indictment of British rule, which after a period of 175 years votes the people in *statu pupilaris* which they are never to outgrow. In the blind intoxication of power they fail to see that such a constitution converts the provincial Councils and the Central Assembly into so many mock debating clubs and is an insult to the political consciousness and the self-respect of the people.

This is no constitution but *autocracy in reality*—though under the camouflage of constitution—which is going to be thrust upon India against her consent. The essential thing in a constitution is the control over the purse but under the new regime the spenders of the taxes will have the key of the chest

while the poor tax-payers will have the privilege of filling it. This represents the political sagacity of a scheme conceived, hatched and nursed in Westminster. It would perpetuate the profligate waste of public money and characterise the Indian administration as a veritable rake's progress.

A striking contrast is presented by the attitude of British statesmen towards Ireland and India. After the failure of the "Black and Tans" method, they were in a hurry to come to terms with the Irish leaders and Mr. Winston Churchill, who was then a member of the cabinet, was especially anxious to enter into peace negotiations.

The story goes (and I have it on reliable authority) that a leading British politician chaffingly whispered to Mahatma Gandhi when he attended the Second Round Table Conference that John Bull had never been known to concede any political rights to a subject nation and that it was only when he found the situation growing too hot for him that he was for conciliatory measures.

I hold that rule to be the most efficient and beneficial in the long run, the ulterior aim of which is the welfare of the people committed to its charge, which takes good care to raise its intelligence and initiative and teaches it self-help. Judged by this standard British rule must be considered a failure in many essential respects, for the trend of development in India has been in the opposite direction. Far from helping India to stand on her own legs, it thwarts every attempt in this direction, it sets class against class—the Hindu against the Moslem, the high castes against the depressed classes, so that India's solidarity may not ever be attained. With this end in view British policy has adopted the most retrograde and reactionary methods. I have been at some pains to point out that in order to pursue this reprehensible object the most disreputable men—men who will not hesitate to barter their country for their own selfish purposes—have been taken under its protective wings. The majority of cultured and politically conscious Hindus and Moslems have recorded their protest against this short-sighted policy in no uncertain voice. Again the All-Bengal Depressed

Classes at their recent meeting have unanimously rejected the Prime Minister's Award as intended to "vivisect" the Hindu society, and while patriotic, selfless Indians are trying their utmost to obliterate the evils of the caste-system it was reserved for the British Premier backed by the diehards to place difficulties in the way.

A foreign visitor on landing on the shores of Bombay or at Calcutta is apt to be dazzled by the stately edifices and palatial hotels; but if he has discerning eyes he will not fail to notice, side by side with the luxurious mode of life of a few sybarites<sup>5</sup>, grinding poverty and harrowing misery of the majority of the dwellers in the city. In fact India is a land of strange contrasts. A few *raises*, merchant princes, landholders and highly paid officials adorn one side of the picture, while on the obverse starving, shrunken figures of the masses who mainly contribute the taxes obtrude themselves. I have just returned from a long summer tour in the southern portion of the district of Khulna. In every village I found the *Bhadrolok* class in destitution—their lands mortgaged—unable to command credit—living in a state of semi-starvation. The peasantry is equally destitute and sunk in despondency without a ray of hope; add to it the water famine and the tale of misery is complete. In North and West Bengal the situation is still worse.

In 1880, *i.e.* more than half a century ago, Sir W. Hunter speaking at Edinburgh stated that one-fifth of the people of India did not know the pleasures of a full stomach. Sir Robert MacCarrison, Director of Nutrition Research Institute, Coonoor, on the eve of his retirement (March 7, 1935) made the authoritative statement that "mal-nutrition is the greatest of the disabilities that beset India." And yet such a people are made to support the huge military burden and the most extravagantly paid Civil Service and the costliest administration.

In every country high hopes and aspirations float before the imagination of the youth. But in India from the dawn of

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<sup>5</sup> In Calcutta this applies mainly to the European inmates in the Chowringhee quarter *i.e.* the "West End."

their intelligence our youngmen have no such vision. The Army and the Navy are to him a sealed book. Careers which are open to the manhood of a free people, they are debarred from. At the present moment 2000 youngmen, some of them highly educated, representing the flower of our people are in internment—detained without trial. Blank despair born of the economic and political condition of the country has overtaken them as also thousands and tens of thousands of other youngmen. Our Government does nothing in the way of opening up honourable careers for them. It has taken good care to slam every door of opportunity for our youth. On the contrary it has shown undue solicitude in obedience to hints and mandates from Whitehall not only to ruin our cottage and home industries but present innumerable obstacles in the path of our attempt in the way of starting large-scale industrial concerns. Indian interests have always been subordinated to those of the dominant power. May be some of our youngmen took to wrong methods for winning *Swaraj*, but surely a government worth the name have a duty to perform. You cannot bring an indictment against an entire people for the sake of a few erring youths.

It has been shown that "the foreign manufacturer has used the arm of political injustice to keep down and ultimately strangle a competitor with whom he could not have contended on equal terms." True we have the Departments of Industries, Agriculture, etc. but they are mere spectacular shows. They are so many white elephants and serve as mere eye-wash.

Foreign rule is always inimical to the true interests of the people. *Our country first—right or wrong* is its guiding principle—and hence the tragic consequences and the mockery of the new constitution. Never in the history of the world has such a ridiculous and humiliating spectacle been offered to the world's gaze. In their selfish blindness our rulers have failed to realise that the willing acceptance by the people for whom a form of government is designed constitutes the best and only guarantee of its successful working. But as Professor Ramsay Muir regretfully observes :



"In the post-war years there has been a perturbing deficiency of first-rate men, men eager to shoulder responsibilities and to face up to difficulties. This has been perceptible in every sphere of life: whether in politics, in business, or in the arts, few great reputations have been made since the war, and the pre-war figures still dominate the scene."

If such is the state of things in England, if bankruptcy in statesmanship is so perceptible, no wonder that the bureaucracy in India steeped to the marrow in worn-out traditions and antiquated notions should fail hopelessly in its task. It fails to diagnose the root-cause of the discontent and applies symptomatic remedies. It can never think of conciliatory measures but looks for its guidance to the Hebrew scripture: "My father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions." Coercion, more coercion,—repression, more repression, is the patent medicine it can prescribe. Vengeance, and not pacification, is writ large on its banner. Surely this is not sound statesmanship.

Charles Gavan Duffy, a leader of the "Young Ireland" movement is tried for sedition and treason-felony; he emigrates to Victoria and in due course rises to be her Prime Minister and a trusted and honoured British citizen. General Smuts was given the supreme command of Republican forces during the Boer War. When peace was restored the conciliatory measures of Campbell-Bannerman converted him into a loyal British citizen. During the great war he commanded troops in British East Africa and fought against the Germans. So invaluable were his services that he was appointed a member of the War Cabinet. The Dutchman became an indispensable colleague and is now regarded as the most far-sighted of the British statesmen. The Mogul Emperors including Aurangzib followed the same policy and thus their rule was broad-based upon the people's interest and goodwill. Our self constituted *trustees* have taken good care to provide against future contingencies by keeping their ward in such a state of bondage that it may never assert itself or stand on its feet. The people are kept in dense ignorance and illiteracy as an incoherent mass.\* It means, British interests first and foremost and Indian interests in the background. As the philosopher has it:

"Concerning the materials of seditions. It is a thing well to be considered: for the surest way to prevent seditions (if the times do bear it) is to take away the matter of them. For if there be fuel prepared, it is hard to tell whence the spark shall come that shall set it on fire."

But in India the oft-repeated lessons of history are ignored. What infinite possibilities and potentialities slumber in the bosom of a people! Most heart-rending economic distress coupled with political discontents constitutes the breeding ground for sedition. Our rulers are averse to removing the root-cause. They forget that coercive measures only drive sedition underground.

It never occurs to our rulers to remove the present discontent because that will lead to the ultimate abrogation of the vested interests of the Civil Service. In every country the services exist for the people, but in India the people exist for the services. The payers of the taxes suffer grievously and the spenders and enjoyers of the taxes, as John Bright said, have it all their own way. Whether all this has been done purposely to emasculate her and leave her behind in the race for progress is more than I can pretend to know. It is for the future historian to draw his inferences and pass his verdict.

Then along with the sinister attempts to create among the Indian people as many hostile camps as possible, all the energies of our rulers are now being diverted and taxed to play off one race or one creed against another. The seeds of dissension are being scattered broadcast, making it impossible for India to rise again as a nation. Indians, at any rate those who are politically conscious, looked forward to the fulfilment of the prophecy of Macaulay made a little over a century ago (1833):

"It may be that the public mind of India may expand under our system till it has outgrown that system; that by good government we may educate our subjects into a capacity for better government; that, having become instructed in European knowledge, they may, in some future age, demand European institutions. Whether such a day will ever come I know not. But never will I attempt to avert or to retard it.

Whenever it comes, it will be the proudest day in English history."

The "proud day" must be postponed to the Greek calends. Indians were asking for bread but have got stones ; instead of securing the good will and active co-operation of the people, instead of applying healing balm our rulers have kept the sore open and pestering. An opportunity which rarely occurs once in the life-time of a nation has been lost. As the American poet has it :

"Once to every man and nation  
comes the moment to decide,  
In the strife of Truth with Falsehood,  
for the good or evil side :

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\*            \*            \*            \*

Then it is the brave man chooses,  
while the coward stands aside,  
Doubting in his abject spirit,  
till his Lord is crucified."

Unfortunately, brute force and sordid instincts have triumphed over moral force. For the dominant race there was much room for magnanimity, for the subject race none. History will not fail to record that here not only was a grand opportunity for Britain to win a place in the grateful "heart of Aryavarta" missed, but a tremendous abuse of power and authority took place.

"O, It is excellent  
To have a giant's strength : but tyrannous  
To use it like a giant.

\*            \*            \*            \*

O, but man, proud man!  
Drest in a little brief authority  
Most ignorant of what he's most assured,  
His glassy essence,—like an angry ape,  
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven,  
As make the angels weep."

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## APPENDIX.

*Note on Communalism* (p. 265).

The following short extract from Graham Wallas' *Human Nature in Politics* (Ed. 1910, p. 203) shows the writer's remarkable foresight as it was penned quarter of a century ago.

"And, if half of what is hinted at by some ultra-imperialist writers and talkers is true, racial and religious antipathy between Hindus and Mohammedans is sometimes welcomed, if not encouraged, by those who feel themselves bound at all costs to maintain our dominant position."

What has been written in Chap. XIV finds an admirable echo in the recent contribution by a cultured and patriotic Moslem. The writer realises that the interests of the Hindus and Moslems are identical and they must sink or swim together.

"When I was in Germany, often and anon, the question was put to me by almost all sections of the German people ranging from highly learned professors of the university down to a common worker as to why, we, the Hindus and the Mohammedans in India, continually fly at the throat of one another. It might be mentioned here, thanks to the British Press, however little the foreigners might know regarding our struggle for freedom, they are always informed in details, I would rather say, in shamelessly exaggerated details, about the Hindu-Mohammedan feuds in India. And the most unfortunate thing is, that there is no Indian organisation to counteract this sinister propaganda of the English Press. The writer tried his best to expose the British Press for carrying on such sort of propaganda against India in his article 'Die Englische Presse und Englische Politik in Indien' published in the *Kieler Neueste Nachrichten*, a daily paper of Kiel. The necessity of press activity in foreign countries to disseminate truth about India and to give a deathblow to the insidious propaganda of the interested party cannot be sufficiently emphasised. The late Vithalbhai Patel of revered memory realised it and hence his princely donation of one lac of rupees was for the purpose. Considering the enormity of the task, the amount is insufficient but a beginning can be made and in course of time, I hope, further contributions would be forthcoming from patriotic Indians to supplement the same. Nobody can belittle the great importance of a world-opinion now-a-days.

"However, seeing the German people very much interested in this question, I took to pen and paper and my first article was published in the *Kieler Neueste Nachrichten* under the caption "Hindus and

Mohamedaner." Little did I think nor could I dream even at the time that the seeds of Hindn-Mohammedan dissension which were being scattered all over India at the instigation of the foreign rulers and which were finding expression here and there in sporadic outburst of riots between the illiterate and ignorant masses of the two communities, would ever grow into giant trees spreading their gloomy shadows over the whole national life of India and stunt its healthy growth! I could never imagine that men having any education worth the name, can also, like the illiterate, ignorant masses, become victims of the policy of 'Divide et impera' of the foreign bureaucracy. There is absolutely no doubt that the Hindn-Muslim problem is a British Government's creation, pure and simple, of recent origin and synchronises with the starting of the National Movement in India. I do not dispute the existence of any ill-feeling between the two communities at the early period of the Mohammedan rule but what I would like to point out is, that this was not because one party was Mohammedan and the other Hindu but because the one was the conqueror and the other conquered. At the outset, it was quite natural that the Hindus resented the domination of the foreigners. The Mohammedans were, after all, foreigners, when they first came to India. But they did not remain foreigners. They were not birds of passages like our British rulers, who come over to India to gather as much money as possible and then fly back to their native country and spend the rest of their lives in comfort and luxury at the cost of poor tax-payers of India but they permanently settled down in this country and became a part and parcel of her population. They realised that their happiness and misery, their joys and sorrows, their life and death were indissolubly bound up with those of their neighbours and fellow-beings, the Hindus. Hence they (Mohammedans) could not but live in peace and amity with them (Hindus). And the Hindus and the Mohammedans did actually live side by side as brothers for several centuries. The Mohammedan rulers founded village schools, dug wells and tanks, made canals for irrigation purposes, built roads and did many other works of public utility. And the villages where the majority of Indian population lived and still live, enjoyed all these blessings of the Mohammedan rule. From time immemorial every Indian village was a self-sufficient unit, having its cultivators, weavers, carpenters, goldsmiths, blacksmiths and artisans. In short, all the useful members which a society requires for its upkeep and prosperity including its headman and Panchayat to settle any dispute that might have arisen there. Practically it was a miniature republic in itself and it remained so, completely uninterfered by Mogul, Pathans, Syeds or whoever might have come, till the

Britisher came and robbed it of the independence which it enjoyed for ages together. A large portion of the Hindu urban population which was relatively small, could find employment in the State. All the high governmental posts were thrown open to the Hindus. 'Mansingh, Todarmull and others found that they enjoyed a consideration under the Mohammedan Sovereign far greater and wider reaching than that which would have occurred to them as independent rulers of their ancestral dominion', says Malleon in his *Akbar and the Rise of the Mughal Power*. According to Stanley Lane Pool, 'Hindu Generals and Brahmin poets led Akbar's armies and governed some of the greatest provinces.' Emperors and Kings were Mohammedans but the administration of the country rested to a great extent in the hands of the Hindus. Under the circumstances, there is no wonder, that the feeling of antagonism which originally existed between the two communities vanished completely and gave place to a feeling of sympathy, friendship and brotherhood. The relation between these two great communities became all the more cordial when inter-marriages were introduced not only in the Royal families but also among the aristocracies. Who can say with certainty that they were not imitated by other classes of people too? History keeps no record of commoners. But for the short-sighted bigotry of Aurangzeb the Hindus and the Mohammedans to-day would have been fused into a powerful homogeneous nation and spared the unhappy lot of being counted as a subject race.

"Closely associated as they were, for centuries, it was quite natural that the Hindus adopted many of the manners and customs of the Mohammedans, who in their turn did many of theirs (Hindus'). The writer still remembers afresh how his late grandfather, who lived in a village, used to give all the members of the family as well as all the servants new clothes during the Durga Puja Festival and how we, all the Mohammedan children clothed in new clothes used to go with great joy and enthusiasm to the neighbouring Hindu and were treated with sweetmeats by our Hindu neighbours. He has also not forgotten how the Hindus of the neighbouring villages used to come to their village to take part in the Moharrum Festival. My grandfather took so much consideration of the religious feelings of his Hindu neighbours, (though the number of the Hindus in the village is very small) that he prohibited the killing of cows within the boundary of his village. And his wish is still respected although he is over twenty years dead. The writer had the honour of visiting the shrine of the Mohammedan Saint, 'Khawja Mainuddin Chisti' in Ajmere, generally known as 'Khawja Sahib', who lived and still counts among his admirers and devotees not only numerous Mohammedans but also an equally large number of

Hindus. Taking into consideration his countless Hindu admirers the 'Khawja Sahib' in his life time ordered his Mohammedan disciples not to slaughter any cow within the city-limits. And his order is obeyed to the letters till to the present day, although there is no force behind it to punish the violation. What I mean to emphasise by citing these instances is, that the Hindus and the Mohammedans should learn to respect the religious feelings of one another of their own free will. There should be no interference, no meddling of a third party, no legislation, no pact, compelling them to do this or preventing them from doing that. Let them not allow a third party to play with their religious susceptibilities. If a Mohammedan has not the large-heartedness to stop cow-killing for the sake of his Hindu neighbour let his Hindu neighbour be broadminded enough to connive at it. And if a Hindu is narrow-minded enough to disregard the religious feeling of his Mohammedan neighbour, let the latter, true to the spirit of Islam, live in peace with him and not fly at his throat.

"But how can we expect such a reasonable attitude, on the part of the members of both these communities, when our so-called leaders, just to satisfy their vanity and to achieve their own selfish motives, are carrying on a policy of separatism? Just at a time, when India's greatest need is to bring these two communities closer than ever, this band of self-seekers and exploiters are trying to bring about a cleavage not only between the innocent, ignorant masses of Hindus and Mohammedans but are also always coming forward with new devices to effect a complete isolation of the educated class of one community from that of the another. Every educational institution ranging from the type of Islamia College, Calcutta, down to a village Maktab, founded on communal basis, cannot but create a feeling of estrangement between the literates of the two communities. Nothing can be more unfortunate, nothing can be more suicidal for a country than to keep the two essential components of her population educationally and culturally aloof from each other. A college like Islamia not only deprives its Muslim students of the advantage of exchange of thoughts and ideas with their culturally much advanced Hindu fellow-students, but also stands as the greatest stumbling block on the way to nationalism. Further I am more than convinced that the Islamia College in Calcutta is doing much more harm than good to the community itself. And how? Let us begin with the teaching staff. The Head of the staff, of course, is an Englishman and I am told that his mere qualification is his English descent. One fails to understand how a Principal of the Calcutta Madrassa (Arabic Dept.) can be appointed as the Principal of a first grade college like Islamia. However, I must admit here, that he is one of the most amiable gentlemen

I have ever met. In appointing the rest of the professional staff, the preference was naturally given to the members of the community, with the result that the efficiency and competency were sacrificed at the altar of the communal spirit. There is no wonder that the Islamia College possesses a staff, which no educational institution worth the name, can be proud of. But what is most deplorable in the teachers, is their lack of vision, of broad mental outlook and last but not the least, of cultural education. (I must concede that there are some honourable exceptions). The lack of these essential qualities in the teachers cannot but spell disaster upon the student community. So to-day when the whole country is pulsating with a new life, to-day when the cry for freedom from the foreign yoke has gone from one end of the country to the other, the students of Islamia College cannot think of anything but of passing their examinations and availing themselves of the opportunity of the policy of favouritism which a foreign Government is following with a purpose. The College like Islamia will go on supplying the foreign bureaucracy with a clerical staff and officers too but will never produce a patriot, a fighter for the cause of country's freedom.

"A few words about Maktabas. I consider them (Maktab) even more harmful than the higher educational institutions. They are the veritable institutions of segregation and deserve the strongest condemnation. They segregate the rising generations of the two great communities at a time when their minds are most pliant, most receptive and most impressionable and hence most capable of contracting an everlasting friendship which might have averted many communal troubles in their subsequent lives. Moreover the money spent for the Maktabas is only a sheer waste of money. Because many of these Maktabas, specially for girls, exist only in the registers and in many others the actual attendance falls far short of attendance as shown in the register. The girls' classes usually being held within the Purdah, avoid the detection of actual state of affairs by the inspecting officers. Now assuming that all these Maktabas do really exist and are regularly attended to, even then their existence cannot be justified. The very rudimentary knowledge of reading and writing which the boys and girls of the Maktabas acquire, is absolutely of no use to them in their later life, because as soon as they come out of the Maktab, their connection with the books are cut off and within a very short period they revert to the realm of illiteracy and ignorance. If the money spent for such educational institutions cannot be called 'waste of money', then I do not know what the 'waste of money' is. This is not a place to deal with reform in primary schools but I shall content myself in saying that much useful purpose will be served by the



amalgamation of the Makhtabs with the primary schools and extending the course of the latter at least to eight years, in order to prevent those boys and girls, who do not intend or cannot afford to prosecute their studies further, from lapsing into illiteracy.

"Our so-called leaders know quite well that their so-called cry for their community is nothing but a cry for self-advertisement, is nothing but a parole to capture the imagination of the ignorant masses and to employ the same for the attainment of their personal gains. They know only too well that so long the evil of a foreign domination hangs over India, no improvement whatsoever, in the sad lots of her labouring masses can be affected. Through the grace of Communal Award, the so-called communal leaders will get some more seats in the councils and the Assembly and with the introduction of the New Constitution some more loaves and fishes of office will go to a handful of so-called educated members of their communities but what about their millions of toiling starving co-religionists? Will there be any changing of their sad lots? Oh! Yes! It will be for the worst, because it is they who will have to bear the burden of the white elephant. The New Constitutions will cost India many crores more. What I mean to say here that if the so-called communal leaders, both Hindus and Mohammedans, are really interested in the welfare of this communities as a whole, if they sincerely wish to raise the millions of their co-religionists from the abyss of abject slavery, untold misery and of toiling starving co-religionists? Will there be any changing of their tragic lots, then they must close up their ranks, must present a united front not in words only but in action, fight out the common enemy and win the freedom for their common motherland".—Zohadur Rahim : *A. B. Patrika*, May 2, 1935.

*Note on the Prime Minister's Award* (p. 269).

The All-Bengal Depressed Classes Conference, that was held at Jhenidah (Jessore) on the 19th and 20th May, 1935, with S. Rajani Kaula Das, B.L., of Dacca in the chair, unanimously rejected the scheme of Indian Constitutional Reforms, now before the Parliament, as disappointing and unacceptable and also the Communal Award being subversive of all principles of nationalism and democracy.

In this connection the following resolution was unanimously passed :

Whereas the constitutional reforms proposals now before the Parliament have denied our political aspiration; whereas these proposals are intended to maintain and perpetuate foreign exploitation and domination, and as such have been unanimously condemned as more retrograde, expensive and humiliating than the existing system, this Conference rejects these reforms proposals in their entirety and

urges the people in general to launch an effective campaign for their rejection throughout the country.

*Note on University Education.*

I have already (Ch. XVIII, Vol. I and Ch. VI in the present Vol.) dwelt at length upon the miseries invited by and entailed upon the Bengali youths on account of degree-hunting mania. An atmosphere has been created so that any young-man minus a degree is regarded as a social leper or an untouchable though if he is successful in business thousands (including graduates) stand before him in fawning and cringing attitude for a favour or a job. The malady is by no means confined to Bengal but has spread to other provinces as well. In Bengal, last year, the number of Matriculation candidates (*i.e.*, aspirants for college entry) was 23,000 while this year the number has risen to 25,000; and the Punjab easily comes off second best with 20,000. Another noteworthy fact is that precisely in proportion to the Matriculation candidates suicides have gone on increasing because of failures in examination. The *Statesman* has recently, in the course of a leader on the subject, some very pertinent remarks to make :

“At least half a dozen boys have taken their own lives since they learned of their failure in the recent matriculation examination for the Punjab University; and even where they have not admitted as much it is inferable that the two events have been cause and effect. That is a very real tragedy, quite apart from the notorious experience that suicide is particularly infectious among the young, as America and Central European countries have shown in times of depression. The victims have received much posthumous sympathy. It would be impossible and churlish not to pity them, as boys caught up and broken on the wheels of a far too mechanical system which their immaturity misunderstands. But immaturity such as theirs is only a ‘mitigating’ circumstance.’ Suicide remains an offence against the law and creed of almost every community in the world and even if the individual conscience honestly repudiates that law, and claims the extreme of personal liberty, we do not see how it can find any argument approving suicide as a relief from trouble. Few people have so little religion in them that they deny the existence or reject the authority of some Supreme Captain, whether the name they honour is God, or the vaguer ‘Life Force,’ or simply Duty to a family. Each man has a life to live, and the least he should do is to keep his end

up in it and do his best in his own department until it is over at the bidding of that Captain.

"But it will be said that through no fault of theirs there is a hopelessly inadequate variety of departments in life, and convention, parental scruples, or their own limited horizons, concentrate and exhaust their minds and *morale* in the single process of which matriculation is a single stage. Then let pity for the suicides allow of still more sympathy with the parents whom they desert, and let that sympathy rebuke both the parents for their blind surrender to a faulty process, and the defects of the process itself. There are common and familiar arguments, and some readers may remember the following example of them :

*Bhadralok* still almost monopolize the clerical and subordinate administrative services of Government. They are prominent in medicine, in teaching, and at the Bar. But, in spite of these advantages, they have felt the shrinkage of foreign employment; and as the education which they receive is generally literary and ill-adapted to incline the youthful mind to industrial, commercial or agricultural pursuits, they have not yet succeeded in finding fresh outlets for their energies. Their hold on land too has weakened owing to increasing pressure of population and excessive sub-infeudation. Altogether economic prospects have narrowed, and the increasing numbers who draw fixed incomes have felt the pinch of rising prices. On the other hand, the memories and associations of their earlier prosperity, combined with growing contact with Western ideas and standards of comfort, have raised their expectations of the pecuniary remuneration which reward a laborious and, to their minds, a costly education.

"That was written seventeen years ago in comment of conditions in another Province; but it is obviously relevant to the case of the student suicides to-day, even if it overstates a few while it understates many more. Indeed, it seems that nowadays not everyone will wait to see what he can make of his completed education : some have been taught to believe so firmly in only one possible key to success that they feel beaten so soon as they have tried and failed to grasp it. Yet in all these seventeen years too little has been done, either by authority or by public opinion, to disentangle and cure the remediable elements in the mischief. New Universities are founded on the old pattern more often than the old are improved to meet changing needs. Committees in various Provinces have suggested reforms whereby there might be some satisfactory alternative to an education 'generally literary and ill-adapted to incline the youthful mind to industrial, commercial or agricultural pursuits,' as the report we have quoted puts it. Something has been done here and there as energy insisted

and resources permitted, and no references to the problem are complete that do not mention what has been done by some Universities to give students larger fields and wider varieties of interests. The recent recasting of Calcutta's matriculation regulations, for example, may well prove to be an outstanding landmark in the history of educational betterment. It tends to be forgotten in discussions on this subject that the Universities of India do not confine their attention to 'arts' (languages and literature, history and philosophy) and law. The 'useful' departments for which there is so much clamour are there; most of them have long been there; science, medicine, engineering, commercial studies, art. It is hard to see what greater choice can be offered.

"Proposals for readjustment and improvement can be slow to take effect. The Punjab Government, for example, has not got further than promising 'most careful consideration' of the competent report of the Anderson Committee which dealt with the need of more 'practical' possibilities in the school curriculum. To its recommendations there has been plenty of political obstruction from the public, while many of those who should be able to profit from it let theories of caste and social convention (hard things to resist any where) prevent them from welcoming the spirit of the report and doing useful and profitable work that they imagine to be beneath their dignity. In other countries men can rise to high positions without university advantages. Britain's Secretary of State for the Dominions to-day was once an engine-cleaner, is proud of it, and was good at it. Some of the leading figures in journalism started their working life by pushing hand carts from printing office to railway station, or wiping surplus ink off the rollers, and never got within sight of a University. Organized education exercises a dominant influence in India. Men cannot become doctors or lawyers or civil servants, or hardly anything except manual workers, except through University qualifications. Even so, the boy who has failed his matric or any other examination has alternatives to despair, and as social organization improves parents may perhaps be less inclined to want their boys to believe that success or failure in an examination at sixteen means success or failure for life as a whole."—May 27, 1935.

I have cited dozens of instances in which youngmen by their pluck and grit have overcome adverse circumstances and come to the fore, in several walks of life, though innocent of college, nay secondary, education. Mr. Bernard Shaw, himself a self-taught man, remarks that "our very peasants have something morally hardier in them that culminates in a Bunyan, a Burns or a Carlyle." This remark is of special importance to a caste-ridden country, where naturally undue importance is

attached to birth or pedigree. Of Henry Morton Stanley, the celebrated African explorer, one reads :

The career which led to his romantic reputation as a man began with his disordered life as a child. He, John Rowland, was the illegitimate son of a maid-servant who neglected him, and of a farmer who was killed in a public house. For eight years an outcast, he languished in the poor-house. At fifteen he became a shepherd, at seventeen he shipped to America as a cabin-boy. There he found a father, the merchant Henry Morton Stanley, whom he had seen reading a newspaper in his office and had accosted with the words, "Do you want a boy, Sir?"—Emil Ludwig: *Genius and Character*.

The origin of Leonardo da Vinci is equally humble and obscure. The great painter, engineer, inventor and the anticipator of Bacon in the experimental (inductive) method rolled into one. Of him it is recorded :

"In a country of famous bastards, among the hills near Empoli, fate chose a young travelling Florentine as the man who was to make a peasant girl the mother of a genius. . . . All the details of his race are lost; but one thing survives, the name of the village. And so a maid brought this poor place immortality: Vinci resounds through the centuries because Leonardo was born there.

"He was a self-taught man who began at thirty teaching himself Latin and mathematics. For this reason he was the enemy of all the academic humanists of his day, who looked down upon him 'because I am not educated,—I, an inventor!' And he felt scorn, most often a gentle scorn, for all sophists and philosophers."—*ibid*.

The curious mentality of our college-bred youngmen finds expression in a correspondence quoted below.

#### UNEMPLOYMENT IN BENGAL.

To The Editor,

Sir,—Your leader of this morning (28-5-35) appears most timely. The educated youths of Bengal are being shut out from all walks of business and service. Employment is getting dearer and rarer and the number of unemployed youths is mounting up by leaps and bounds. University degrees are now considered of no economic value—rather these degrees hang round the necks of graduates like garlands of shame. Unwanted everywhere, bereft of hope and denuded of cheer they swim for a time against the current and then sink down into eternal despair. This useless waste of Bengal's youthful energy is a serious loss to the nation. But few in Bengal cared to probe the disease and find a cure. It will

be a good day for Bengal if you, Sir, take up this question in all seriousness and pursue it in a series of articles, without rest or respite, to rouse the sleeping Leviathan of her business magnates to action. The idea requires to be hammered into the brains of all who care for the material welfare and prosperity of Bengal and her children.

There are no want of capable "Bengalee industrialists, bankers and businessmen" in Calcutta and if they will all pool their resources and strength together, the regeneration of dying Bengal will not long remain an idle brain's fantasy. If in this attempt European and non-Bengalee businessmen and organisations join, that will be welcome. But even if they do not, the Bengalee industrialists and businessmen by themselves can surely be expected to do their duty to their own Province and people. A touch of sympathy and a dose of active help, on lines touched by you, to start them on their feet in business, will easily transform the present outlook of the Bengalee youths from one of rank despondency to one of high expectations. Will the Roys and Laws of Bengal fail to rise equal to the occasion? Bengal is proud of them and in this national crisis—this ever-recurring wastage of educated Bengalee youths due to unemployment and privations is nothing less than a crisis—it is they alone that can retrieve the situation before it is absolutely out of hand. You will do a real national service if you can wield your pen to bring that consummation about.

Luckless Graduate.

The youngmen must go through the tread-mill of the University and the moment he comes out of it he expects to be provided with a job, failing which disappointment overtakes him. "He is shut out from all walks of business and service." His pathetic appeal is first directed to European and non-Bengali businessmen, failing which he turns his wistful eyes towards the Roys and Laws of Bengal; in other words everything should be done *for* him and nothing *by* him.

During the last quarter of a century I have been trying to bring home to him that the non-Bengalis, notably the Marwaris, have effected the economic conquest of Bengal by their grit, dogged perseverance, industry and thrift. He ought to know that they began their operations a century or more ago in the pre-railway days with the proverbial *lota*, *kanli* and *chhatu* i.e., a brass pot, a blanket and a handful of parched and powdered barley and grain, while our ancestors who were in the possession of the field of commerce and trade

were idling away in ease and luxury. Even now the non-Bengali continues his conquest of Bengal with no other stock-in-trade than the above mentioned articles. Is the young graduate, indolent and ease-loving that he is, prepared to tramp the countryside in the burning sun on a diet of *chhatu*? On the contrary he wants his path to be strewn with roses. He coolly ignores that the university education has utterly incapacitated him for the rough-and-tumble of a successful business career.

Then the Roys and Laws are invoked to help him out of the quagmire of despondency. Well, the Roys of Hatkhola are doing their bit. They ceased to be mere money-lenders long ago. They have been successfully running an inland steamship line in fierce competition with a powerful English company for years past and they have also started a big jute mill. The Laws have also recently taken to business as well. The list of business magnates is soon exhausted. The Roys and Laws can at best find employment for a few scores of youths. But what of the thousands and tens of thousands of unemployed graduates? Then again the graduate must be trained and apprenticed not only for a quill-driving job but for higher employments. But then he must forget that he can only quote Shakespeare and Bertrand Russell. He must again begin *de novo* at the lowest rung of the ladder on a poor remuneration and slowly rise to higher steps. But as I have already shown he has wasted the precious period of his life.

How helpless as a baby in earning his daily bread and how utterly ignorant of business instincts an average graduate is, is further proved by the "Ten Commandments for the Government of Bengal to cure Unemployment" suggested by a B. Sc. correspondent in the *A. B. Patrika* (July 4, 1935). I select one or two choice items:

The government is "to establish jute mills, cotton mills and sugar mills on a big scale and train Bengali boys in the management of the same." This is the mentality of an average graduate. Everything should be done for him. He forgets or

ignores that anything done through state agency becomes an extravagantly costly affair. Moreover to start with, expert weaving and spinning masters and foremen (European or non-Bengali) must be secured for the first few years and under them the Bengalis must undergo thorough training before they can be entrusted with full responsibility. Moreover, graduate apprentices generally prove a costly luxury and in nine cases out of ten they will turn out to be failures. I have shown that ever since the first jute mill was opened, there have sprang up some seventy or eighty more, and of late several jute mills owned and managed by Marwaris and another at Lilooah by Messrs. Adamjee Hajee Dawood & Co., Ltd. Only one jute mill (The Premchand) so far has been started by Bengali enterprise. The three or four cotton mills started by the Bengalis, taken together, contain a less number of spindles and looms than the Kesoram Cotton Mills owned and managed by a Marwari firm.

As regards sugar mills the B. Sc. correspondent and his confrères are ignorant of the simple fact that there are already some 90 or more (*ante* p. 133) sugar mills in the United Provinces and Behar doing a roaring business. Some 4 or 5 sugar mills have already been started on a big scale by Marwari enterprise and only a small one by Bengali capital and management. But the helpless Bengali graduate can only invoke government help like the waggoner in *Æsop's Fables* who would call upon Hercules without laying his shoulder to the wheel.

Both in Vol. I, Ch. XXVI and in the present volume (Ch. VI) I have discussed *ad nauseam* the utter ineptitude of the Bengali in the business world. The graduates are hopelessly inefficient. The path to a successful career in business lies not through the university career. The biggest jute mill on the Hugli is owned by a Marwari firm of which the leading figure is Sir Hukumchand Swarupchand, who does not know even English (*continued on p. 447*).

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*Note on the Budget of Bengal (p. 209).*

The Provincial Government is equally on a par with the Imperial Government in turning a deaf ear to the piteous appeals of the councillors. It is said that the last straw broke the camel's back. But evidently it is considered that the peasant's back can bear any amount of load, no matter to what straits he is reduced. Recently the Bengal Government introduced five additional new taxes (on electricity, court-fees, amusement, tobacco etc.) It should be remembered that the peasant has to bear a not-inconsiderable share of the Imperial taxation *e.g.*, price of post cards has been trebled ; duty on sugar nearly 160 per cent.; on textiles 50 per cent. etc., also duty on salt, kerosene, petrol etc. At a time when his income has been very much reduced (p. 205), the local Government has thought it fit to saddle him with additional burden. The utterly callous indifference of our rulers to the grinding poverty and miseries of the people need not cause surprise when we bear in mind John Bright's utterance, "the tax-payers have no voice in the control of the spenders and enjoyers of the taxes."

The Swan Committee (presided over by a Commissioner of a Division) recommended that retrenchment to the extent of rupees one crore and eighty lakhs could be easily affected. But the top-heavy and the princely paid system must be kept intact and what is still more, following in the wake of the Imperial Government the cut in the salary must be restored ! Mr. G. D. Birla pointed out in 1931 that "Government servants are about the happiest," as all other classes have been hard hit, and yet the over-pampered services must get relief at the expense of the helpless peasant.

It must be said to the credit of the Moslem members that a few of them entered their protest but that only with regard to the tobacco bill ; on other items, I understand, they voted solid with the Government. The absence of the Congress group has given an opportunity to the most incompetent and third-rate men to get in. The Government, with their help as also with that of the European group and the nominated members,

ever ready to obey the behests of those to whom they owe their existence, can carry any measure it likes.

#### THE TOBACCO-TAX—ITS OBJECTION.

After the mutiny the finances of India had been upset and James Wilson, a financier of established reputation in England was sent out to place them on a sound basis. Wilson produced a budget, which comprised proposals for income-tax, a tobacco tax and a system of licence on trades and professions. Lord Canning however disapproved of the tobacco tax. Ultimately under Andrew Laing, another able financier, who succeeded Wilson, the tobacco tax had been abandoned, owing to the inquisitorial nature of the supervision it would involve in its collection.

As regards the hardship on the poor peasant if a tobacco-tax was imposed the following advice may prove interesting :

"Let Government impose any tax it likes—income-tax, licence tax, succession tax, salt tax, feast tax, or fast tax, but let it have a care that it does not tax that precious weed, which is the Bengal raiyat's balm of Gilead—his only solace amid the privations of his wretched life."—*Govinda Samanta, the History of a Bengal Raiyat*, Ed. 1874, by Rev. Lal Behari Dey.

The "nation-building" departments are a mere *simulacrum* (p. 211). The recent discussion in the Bengal Council on state-aid to industries is a fitting commentary on the above.

#### STATE-AID TO INDUSTRIES : STRONG CRITICISM OF GOVT.'S POLICY.

The way in which the Bengal State-Aid to Industries Act was being worked, came in for a good deal of trenchant criticism in the Bengal Legislative Council yesterday (Thursday), March 24/35.

The question was raised by Mr. N. R. Norton and Mr. Narendra Kumar Basu by way of two token cuts in the demand for grant for "Industries".

Mr. Norton said that when the Act was passed, it brought great hope to the budding industrialists but so far no one had been benefited. The only money spent so far had been approximately Rs. 1250 to pay for advertisements in the daily papers to invite objections to those applications which the Board had recommended to the Government. When this Act was passed, an Advisory Board was formed. This Board

had met once per month approximately since November 1932, spending a considerable amount of time in considering the various applications and had received valuable advice from the Director of Industries and his staff.

The position was this, proceeded the speaker, that up to the end of January, 1934—twenty-seven months after the first meeting of the Board, they found *that not a single pice had yet been paid to any applicant* and there appeared to be very little likelihood of anything being done in the near future. For, the length of time taken by Government to consider the recommendations of the Board and then the inordinate length of time again taken to arrange the preliminary mortgage, etc., simply disheartened the applicants so that they eventually withdrew their applications.

It should also be borne in mind that the applications were only for small sums. There is evidently no money to spare for the help of struggling industries.

*Note on the Police Budget (p. 211).*

In proportion as the cost of police has increased lawlessness and dacoities have got a free hand. Almost every day several cases are reported in the dailies :

Lawlessness in the country increases, it seems, along with the increase of the cost of maintaining "law and order". One-fifth of the public revenues of Bengal is consumed by the Police Department with the result that there scarcely passes a day without reports of daring dacoities committed in this or that part of the country. In our yesterday's issue there appeared reports of several dacoities the most daring of which was the one reported from Noakhali where the dacoits numbering about 40 and armed with guns, daggers etc., raided the house of a talukdar and money-lender, mercilessly belaboured the inmates of the house, including a guest, and decamped with a fairly large booty. The primary function of the Police in all civilized countries is to afford due protection to life and property of the people but unfortunately this is exactly the task which is most ill performed by our guardians of law and order. The Home Member seems to think that he is there to white-wash the conduct of the Police and to support them in all their acts, good, bad or indifferent.—Daily paper, April 11/35.

Fifty-two cases of dacoity were reported to the police from the different districts during the week ending April 6 and in the following week the figure was 28. During March, 148 cases were reported in Bengal alone.

*Note on the New Constitution.*

After the book has nearly been printed off, some facts have come out which corroborate my statements made in the foregoing chapters.

That the Assembly is a mere mock parliament where the members are allowed to deliver speeches, while the bureaucrats laugh in their sleeves and ride roughshod over them and turn a deaf ear to the popular demands is conclusively proved by this year's discussion over the Finance Bill. The presentation of the Budget is a mere farce. Eighty per cent. of the expenditure (*e.g.* under military and railways, pay and pension of the Civil Service etc.) is non-votable; while the remaining 20 per cent. is submitted as a matter of courtesy. The one thing which weighs with the bureaucrats is the balancing of the budget, no matter how intolerable be the sufferings of the people.

In this connection it is important to bear in mind that even the European group, ever ready to support government with its vote, lost patience, while Sir Cowasji Jehangir, an ultra-moderate, equally joined hands with the European members.

The Assembly, on Saturday, (April 6, 1935) by 64 votes to 41, rejected Sir James Grigg's amendment restoring the salt duty, thereby refusing to accept the Viceroy's recommendation to pass the finance bill in its original form.

Sir James Grigg thereupon requested the President for endorsement of the certification.

Mr. Bhulabhai Desai (Congress leader) said that . . . . .  
 . . . . . the army expenditure was non-votable. Then the five per cent. cut in salaries had been restored costing two crores. At a time when the price level had fallen by forty per cent., could not the service men have continued the cut which they imposed on themselves three years ago?

Continuing Mr. Desai quoted extensively from Lord Durham's description of the situation in Canada given 101 years ago, which aptly described the situation in India today. Lord Durham had condemned the system of Government, where

hostility to the people of the country by those who governed was a qualification for honour, so that incompetent men were given positions of glory and the advice tendered to the Governor-General was bad advice. Similarly advice tendered to the Governor-General was bad advice, because five crores could have been easily found.

Sir Cowasji Jehangir expressed his sincere regret that the Government should have acted in the way they had done. . . . . If ever there was proof that radical change was required in the present constitution, that proof had been supplied by the Government benches. What about the safeguards, were they to be used in the same way? (Voices : worse ways) Sir Cowasji said that the safeguards would prove the greatest hindrance to the government of the future.

Sir Leslie Hudson on behalf of the European Group declared: We believe that some of them might have been accepted without detriment to the budgetary position and that such action could be taken in the interests of this country. We recognise that the Government alone are ultimately responsible for the consequences of their policy. We are also responsible to our constituents for the fullest expression of their views. The Government, therefore, cannot expect us in this matter to shirk our responsibility and share theirs, when they have not heeded our representations. And under the circumstances and in order to express our disappointment, we propose to remain neutral on this vote.

Regarding the safeguards provided for in the proposed constitution as you look into details, new beauties arise.

*The New Statesman and Nation*, dated Saturday, April 13, 1935, writes :

"Mr. Churchill grossly overstated his case when he used the alleged discontent of the Indian Civil Service as a weapon with which to assail the whole India Bill. Some discontent, however, there is and it availed to draw Sir Samuel Hoare's consent to a most questionable amendment. The fact seems to be that five members of the executive of the Bengal Civil Service Association circularised a critical memorandum among its members with the curious announcement that silence would imply

consent. Six individuals dissented, the rest were silent, but whether in assent or contempt who shall say? Thanks to this hint of discontent and to some speeches from 'loyal' Conservatives, the hands of future Indian Government are now more tightly bound than ever in dealing with the Civil Service. Not only are the interests of all present members secured, but it is now laid down that changes affecting the interests of those who enter in the future can be brought about only by an Act of Parliament. In other words, *Westminster fixes the remuneration of future Civil Servants, but Delhi pays the bill*. Subsequently the Labour Party tried but failed to remove one of the meanest of the minor tributes laid on the Indian people. The cost of Christian chaplains who serve not merely soldiers but civilians also is actually imposed on Hindu and Mohammedan tax-payers. Not only so, but this establishment is a reserved subject, which the elected legislature may not touch. Imperialism is subject to curious lapses of dignity."

If diarchy has proved to be a dismal failure and a costly luxury, the present constitution will turn out to be a veritable curse. Not only from the financial point of view it will prove to be ruinous but its moral effect on the people will be ever more pernicious. Under the existing regime only the sycophants and flunkies, who are lost to all sense of shame and self-respect—who have no hesitation in selling their country's interests, jump at seizing the reins of administration, knowing full well that they are mere passive tools and ciphers. (p. 127). But the men who really matter cannot be cajoled by ignoble methods of gubernatorial blandishments and necessarily refuse to accept office.

The greatest drawback of British rule is the underlying principle that "everything must be done *for* you and nothing *by* you." It is in keeping with its tradition that the people should be kept like birds in a cage protected from hawks and falcons but unable to help themselves. Hence all that go to the making of a people—self-help, initiative, resourcefulness, adaptability to altered condition are atrophied. Hence when a famine or flood or earthquake overtakes the country, private effort to cope with the calamity is looked askance or regarded as anathema. All that you have to do is to pay handsome subscription or donation into the coffers of Government with what results I need not recapitulate (see Vol. I, p. 234 *et. seq.*, this

Vol., Ch. VIII, p. 156). From this point of view British rule must be pronounced to be a failure.

The attitude of the Government in regard to the Quetta earthquake relief is a case in point. Mahatma Gandhi, Mr. Rajendra Prasad, the Congress President, and other eminent leaders undertook to proceed to the scene of devastation with batches of self-sacrificing volunteers and render what aid they could. But the Indian Government refused permission. This has naturally been the occasion of much adverse criticism in the Indian nationalist papers. Why should the Government dread publicity of its doings? Funds are flowing in not only from England but also from foreign lands. Why should Quetta be treated as an *arcanum* or a *zenana* under strictly purda seclusion? In every country a national Government should have welcomed volunteer services as valuable auxiliary to its own efforts. But the official view of things runs counter to the notion of the people taking initiative in such matters. Every sort of relief measure must be initiated and organised by the *ma bab* (paternal) Government and the Indian public should only contribute to its coffers and stand aside and look helplessly on. Theirs not to reason why but to pay and sigh. Quetta is a military station and can be screened off from public gaze. Fortunately, when a national calamity overtakes a British province no such quarantine can be imposed.<sup>1</sup>

That the Government fights shy of entering into competition with private efforts is voiced by the organ of the British mercantile community and of imperialism :

"It (Bengal Govt.) should take warning from the floods in North Bengal when government was slow to believe and act, but Sir P. C. Roy, quick, with the consequence that many observers, not all of them Indian nor all prejudiced against Government, thought that Government flood-relief work came

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<sup>1</sup> It is unnecessary to mention here the significant omission of all references to flood-relief work by private agencies in the Administration Reports of the Bengal Government; evidently the bureaucracy is afraid of the public recognition of the part played by the people themselves.

very badly out of the comparison. Sir P. C. Roy has again come forward to ask for a repetition of the support in men and money given him at that time and we do not doubt that he will succeed. . . . If government were to give any appearance of not appreciating the gravity of the situation or of otherwise failing, it would have very little credit left"—*The Statesman*, 12th August, 1931.

How clumsily and fruitlessly Government agency does relief work has already been shown. The pay of the officials and their halting and travelling allowances often swallow up more than half of the amount allotted or collected. But the volunteers of national organisations are self-less workers; they go to the huts of the sufferers in the remote villages and by personal inquiries are in a position to bring real help to the door; whereas officials can only dole out relief from the headquarters and through mercenaries.

After the Franco-Prussian war Bismarck, at the zenith of his fame as a statesman, made the colossal blunder of insisting on the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine—two provinces not essential to a united Germany. "The choice before him was either to make large annexations or to appease France. The task of appeasement was far the more difficult. It would involve a terrific struggle with the generals; it meant resisting German national feeling, now at the full tide as the result of the war. On the other hand to gather up the immediate fruits of victory was the easy course."

France now began to cherish the spirit of revenge ("revanche") and increase her military power. Germany in turn entered on a competitive race, with the result that other powers were compelled to follow suit. The whole of Europe thus became an "armed camp". President Wilson rightly declared that the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine poisoned the international life of Europe for the next forty years.

Although Britain is not Germany and India is not France, but the analogy holds good in essential respects. The moral is that a people's feelings should not be outraged and trampled upon. In their moment of intoxication British statesmen are



unable to take long-range views. According to them India at the moment is hopelessly disunited, she lies prostrate at the feet of the dominant power, hence *any* constitution which may suit its fancy must be forced upon the former.

It has been taken for granted that India will never grow into political manhood. At any rate this is a consummation devoutly wished by the Imperialists ; hence the frantic efforts of angling for an alliance with the Moslem and of weaning away the so-called depressed classes.

For India also a pregnant lesson is to be learned. She must close her ranks, cease from wrangling over petty, parochial and communal interests and look at things from broad national standpoints. That patriotic Moslems can rise superior to immediate personal gains is proved by the numerous quotations from their writings and speeches which I have taken care to put in. Just at this moment the following statement issued to the press by Mr. Md. Azahar, Secretary, "Anti-Separate Electorate League" is significant :

"The Nationalist Muslims of Bengal strongly protest against the recent move of some reactionary Muslims who in spite of the constant demand of the Muslim masses for joint electorate are now pressing for the retention of separate electorate clause in the forthcoming India Bill, which will blight for ever the chances of India's attaining Purna Swaraj. We emphatically declare that, with the exception of a few aristocratic and capitalist Moslems, the entire Shia Muslims and the majority of Sunni Muslims are in favour of joint electorate, and they unanimously support clause 299 of the India Bill, 1935, by which separate electorate for minorities can at any time after the passing of the act be abolished by an order-in-council either pursuant to resolutions passed by a majority in council or any Provincial Legislature or after consultation with them."

But a communique of the Government of India dated 2nd July, 1935, takes good care to inform the Indian public that the communal "award" cannot be modified or changed before the expiry of ten years. So Mr. Azahar's optimism receives a rude shock.

*Note on "Indigenous Peace, Liberty and Justice"  
and Military Expenditure.*

Before sending his big handiwork, the Indian Constitution (and consternation) Bill, up to the House of Lords after making it as retrograde for India and profitable to Great Britain as he and his colleagues could, Sir Samuel Hoare uttered the following self-congratulatory words in the course of a speech in the House of Commons :

"The Federation is a great conception, and we shall have shown to the world that we succeeded in a time of crisis in establishing in Asia a great territory of indigenous peace, liberty and justice."

What is *indigenous* peace, liberty and justice? Are there two species or varieties of peace, liberty and justice, indigenous and exotic? If so, Indians may console themselves with the thought that they have got such varieties of peace, liberty and justice as could grow in India, though these may be inferior to exotic varieties.

Peace in the sense of absence of war there is in India. But is that enough? Peace is valued because of the progress in enlightenment and the prosperity which are associated with it. But where is enlightenment and where prosperity? Not to speak of enlightenment, even "literacy is rare outside urban areas, and even in these the number of literates bears but a small proportion to the total population," according to the Report of the Joint Committee on Indian Constitutional Reform, Vol. I, Part I, page 2. According to the Indian Census of 1921, the illiterates were 92.9 per cent of the population; according to the Census of 1931, they were 92 per cent. But even this slight progress of .9 per cent in ten years is illusory: for, whereas in 1921 the total number of illiterates was 29,34,31,589, in 1931 it was 32,16,28,003.

As regards prosperity, the Montagu-Chelmsford Report, signed by the then Secretary of State and the then Governor-General, states that "the immense masses of the people are poor, ignorant, and helpless far beyond the standard of Europe" (Section 132). The Joint Select Committee's Report also states that in India "the average standard of living is low and can

scarcely be compared with that of the more backward countries of Europe" (Vol. I, Part I, page 2).

So, if India has got peace, it has been a sort of "peace at any price," speaking figuratively. But literally, at what price?

This miscalled 'indigenous' variety of peace is maintained by the army in India at a disastrous cost. Mr. George Lansbury writes in *Labour's Way with the Commonwealth*, p. 72 :

"In the Report of the Simon Commission, Sir Walter Layton points out that defence accounts for no less than 61½ per cent of the expenditure of the Government of India. This, he points out, is 'a higher proportion than in any other country in the world.' It is slightly less now, but still appallingly high, and it should be noted that this military expenditure does not include expenditure on strategic railways, etc. The result, as Sir Walter Layton points out, is that 'other kinds of expenditure are low . . . Many forms of Government service are very little developed.'

How high, comparatively speaking, India's military expenditure is, will appear from the following note in *World Events of America* :

Originating in the Japanese Finance Department and reprinted by the *Manchester* (England) *Guardian*, perhaps the world's most dependable newspaper, the percentages of funds going into armaments, out of various national budgets, stand as follows :

		1931-32	1932-33	1933-34	1934-35
Japan	...	34·65	36·71	42·50	61·63
France	...	22·85	23·35	21·67	21·57
Italy	...	27·20	26·29	22·76	21·39
U. S. A.	...	19·54	18·68	18·66	18·14
Britain	...	11·72	11·03	13·01	13·57
German	...	6·44	8·22	11·32	13·85

In rural Bengal, where there are dacoities every month and week, is there complete security of life and property?

After the establishment of *indigenous* peace comes the establishment of *indigenous* liberty. We have admitted that there is peace in the sense of absence of war. But we are afraid we cannot admit that Sir Samuel Hoare and his colleagues or their

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<sup>a</sup> Cmd. 2569 of 1930, p. 216, para 248.

predecessors in office have established liberty in India. Or, leaving aside the past and the present, it cannot be admitted that when the Government of India Bill becomes the law of the land, it will establish *indigenous* liberty. But we fully admit that, though the *indigenes*, the natives of the soil, will not be made free citizens by it, it will confer liberty, freedom, autonomy on various exotics. The *indigenes*, the natives, will not enjoy freedom of movement, freedom of speech, freedom of the press and freedom of association owing to the ordinary restrictive penal laws and the restrictive regulations, ordinance-like laws. They will have no control over the Services, defence, foreign affairs, exchange, currency, finance, etc., and there will be no fiscal independence. They will not be free to promote their industries, commerce and shipping by adopting such measures as free countries have adopted and may adopt for the purpose.

The above is quoted from the *Modern Review*, July, 1935.

*Note on Failure of Educated Boys in Industry* (p. 435).

Lord Trent at Leys School, Cambridge, spoke in praise of industry as a career for the public schoolboy.

"Industry is the life blood of the nation", he said. "Every single person of the 45,000,000 people in this country is indirectly, if not directly dependent upon the success that attends upon our industries.

"More and more it was being realised that anyone running a business had three main objects in view—to serve the community, to look after the people he employed, and to make a profit for himself or his shareholders. But don't forget that a public schoolboy, even if he has a trunkful of prizes and blazers and caps of all colours, when he enters business cuts about as much ice as a new-born baby. His value to the firm is less than that of an elementary schoolboy who has had a few months' experience of his job running errands or licking envelopes and who, what is more, has a much greater first-hand knowledge of life and its problems.

"For a time the old public schoolboy will be a liability rather than an asset to his firm. He will have to settle down, learn his job, and learn above all to mix with people whose origin, whose home life, whose whole background, in short, is quite different from his."

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*Note on British Imperialism* (pp. 250-253).

It would require another Norman Angell and another *Great Illusion* to prove the simple thesis that a contented and prosperous India would be more paying to Britain, that she would consume many times more of British goods than a discontented and impoverished India. Political subjection counts but little in this respect. If the volume of trade of Britain with the United States of America and of Canada be compared with that of India, this simple fact will be borne out. But the average imperialist of the type of Churchill and Beaverbrook, who unfortunately dominate the British policy, is no better than the man-in-the-street in his narrow and selfish outlook.

Countries.	Imports from United Kingdom		Exports to United Kingdom	
	1931-32	1932-33	1931-32	1932-33
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
India ...	44,81,43,521	48,79,79,622	42,87,59,975	37,45,85,636
	Dols.	Dols.	Dols.	Dols.
United States	105,443,000	73,786,000	376,969,000	257,194,000
	Dols.	Dols.	Dols.	Dols.
Canada ...	106,372,000	86,381,000	174,963,000	185,133,000

Population of India, the United States and Canada in millions is 352, 122, and 10 $\frac{1}{3}$  respectively. The figures are from the *Statesman's Year-Book* for 1934.

*Eloquent Commentary on Economic Distress in Bengal* (p. 207).

"India is a land of opulence, India is a land of perpetual famines, India is a land of contradictions. One need not go far. In the streets of Calcutta at any time one may find immensely rich men moving about in motor cars and squandering money like anything—in the very same

streets one will find poor beggars, who have nothing but napkins to wear, -king their daily bread from the dust-bins, the remnants of food thrown into those receptacles being the only eatables available to them. How many of our rich people, zemindars, merchants, Government servants, ever think of these destitute people? They are born like animals, and they live and die like animals on the footpaths of the city!

"The hunger-marchers' procession at Burdwan shows but an infinitesimal portion of the picture. Indians, especially the dumb millions, have not yet learnt to make demonstrations in the way in which the Westerners do these. Otherwise there would have been not one or two demonstrations of hunger-marchers but thousands and thousands of them. One hundred and fifty emaciated men, women and children give but a poor idea of the distress in the land. If one wishes to have a real idea of the distress one has only to go to the villages in the interior. The glamour of the cities, their bioscopes, theatres, schools, colleges, hospitals, etc., do not represent India. The real India is in the villages."

—*A. B. Patrika*, July 28/35.

Another thoughtful writer observes:

"The requirements of the world to-day have greatly changed. The demand for prime necessities such as food and normal clothing has decreased, in favour of things to satisfy desires that are obviously of secondary importance, even pure nonsense. Essentials are being systematically relegated to the background, while everything for the leisure hours is much in demand. Luxury, or at any rate imitation luxury, is popular—every one must have it. In the United States the French phrase, 'de luxe', has become quite stereotyped. Ordinary clothing is superseded by fabrics considered more 'de luxe'—less wool and cotton, but more silk, and ten times more artificial silk—so the cotton trade suffers in consequence.

"Meanwhile, a host of new expenses figure in every one's budget, expenses suggested by industries which seem almost to have sprang out of the blue, for, twenty years ago they did not even exist. The world's consumption is now largely made up of an endless demand for automobiles, gramophones, radios, electrical gadgets, telephones, cinematographs, cameras etc. . . . This is evidently one by-product of the spread of democracy among the masses, who weary of restraint, are at last insisting on having their share in

the good things of life. By diminishing the general sense of responsibility and thrift, and by suddenly revealing the profound instability of our age, the war hastened this evolution of humanity towards immediate gratification. Asia and Africa are rapidly following in the wake of America and Europe in this respect. The progress of the American export trade in all the newer markets is based on the sale of motor cars, cinema films, electrical equipment, radios, type-writers, office equipments and calculating machines, sewing machines, household utensils, refrigerators, agricultural implements, road making machinery, oil-drilling equipments, and so on.

"Naturally, there are still and there always will be purchasers for basic manufactured goods produced by the metal, cotton, and woollen trades, but these are no longer the star turns. Although they are still important, in fact essential, they have been the least prosperous since the War. The blue ribbon is now bestowed elsewhere, and countries which by necessity or habit, are identified with these staple industries are liable to be out of date, and, to a certain extent, out of the running. They are losing the world's markets, and the wealth which once flowed to them is turning towards the new type of producer."—André Siegfried: *England's Crisis*, pp. 95-97.

The above was written some six years ago; but within this short period Japan has stolen a march over England, Germany and America. As far as India is concerned, in spite of high protective tariffs, Japan is capturing the Indian market. Her export over import is increasing by leaps and bounds.\*

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\* Only a few years ago the export from India to Japan far exceeded the import, but the figures for 1932-33 are eloquent of Japan's progress.

It will be seen that the exports of Indian produce have practically remained constant, whilst imports have increased by seven crores in the course of a single year. In the figures for 1933-34 this upward movement of import is still more marked.

Imports into India from Japan.		Exports of Indian produce to Japan.	
1931-32	1932-33	1931-32	1932-33
Rs. 13,33,96,671	Rs. 20,47,73,829	Rs. 13,94,28,225	Rs. 13,95,09,778

The marvellous cheapness of her products readily appeals to the poverty-stricken masses, and our nascent home-industries are threatened with ruin.

The writer has truly said that Asia and Africa are rapidly following in the wake of America and Europe in this respect. This slavish imitation of the West bids fair to be our undoing. During the last four or five years our income has materially diminished owing to trade depression and the low price of the agricultural produce but the rage for amusements, gewgaws and gadgets is ever on the increase, and is instrumental in the drain of the wealth of our land. We are apt to lose sight of the fact that a drastic simplification of life would improve our health, our minds and character. Greeks did not believe that there is something fine in every superlative or that a nation that travels sixty miles an hour is necessarily six times as civilized as one which travels only ten. We are abandoning the traditional way of life. So far increase of knowledge is increase of sorrow.

*Note on the Educational Activity of my Father.*

In Vol. I (p. 10) I had occasion to say that my father "imbibed the ideas of 'Young Bengal' ; he was one of the pioneers of the educational movement in the district and almost the first girl's school was opened by him at Raruli." Mr. Jogesh Chandra Bagal has recently unearthed from the dust-laden and worm-eaten files of old newspapers an account of the activity of my father in the cause of spread of education—specially female education—as early as 1858. The following is a translation of his Bengali article in the columns of the weekly journal "Desh" (17-2-34).

"The early years of the nineteenth century saw the introduction of English education in Calcutta. Soon it spread to rural areas as well. Men interested in the spread of education were not wanting in those days. Anglo-Vernacular schools were started in villages, some of them of no note at all, through their effort. It is interesting to note that female



education was not ignored and there were schools for girls also in many places. Harish Chandra Rây Choudhuri provided opportunity of education to boys and girls of the locality by founding a school at his native place Raruli. Excerpts from the "Samvad Provakar" and "Sambad Sadhuranjan" will give us a glimpse into the efforts then made for the spread of education.

SPREAD OF EDUCATION IN THE LOCALITY AROUND RARULI.

("Sambad Provakar", Feb. 10, 1858 ; B.S. 29th Magh, 1264).

"Recently a Government grant-in-aid Vernacular School has been started at Raruli through the efforts of Harish Chandra Rây Choudhuri and others. Boys and girls have been receiving excellent teaching since, and have in this short period attained a general proficiency hardly to be met with anywhere else. The Collector of Jessore, and Mr. Iswar Chandra Mitra, Deputy Magistrate of Khulna and some highly educated gentlemen visited the school in the month of Magh last, and examined the scholars. They left with very good impression. Credit for this, if mention need be made of it, must go to Pandit Mohanlal Vidyabagish, for his excellent method of teaching, and to Harish Chandra Rây Chaudhuri referred to above, for the unflagging interest he takes in it."

("Samvad Sadhuranjan", May 28, 1858 ; B.S. 12th Jaistha, 1265.)

"Four boys of the Raruli School have been awarded scholarships in the School Final Examination held in September. Babu Dayal Chandra Ray, Deputy Inspector, examined the boys. Supported with these scholarships Harish Chandra Basu and Nabin Chandra Ghosh will study medicine in the Calcutta Medical College, and Sital Chandra Basu, and Pareshnath Ray will go in for English education in the Jessore High English School for four years. Diligence rewarded has very naturally given a stimulus to studies. Such results within two years of its start highly speak of the teachers. The teaching is entrusted to Mohanlal Vidyabagish, a scholar from the Sanskrit College. The great promoter or friend of education Mr. Harish Chandra Rây Choudhuri, who is versed in many languages, is the Secretary of the school by Government nomination. He takes delight in teach-

ing and gives at least two hours to it daily. His teaching is such as illumines the mind of the boys, just as a pearl from the depth of the sea, reflecting sun's rays illumines an opaque substance. The school is fast growing into a useful institution, affording opportunity to boys and girls to study literature and other subjects. In three or four years, it is expected to make a record progress. A visit to the school and examination of the boys of this school, of which we have spoken so highly, by the Deputy Inspector of Schools on 10th inst., was followed close by a visit from Mr. Woodrow, the Inspector of Schools, who examined the boys and girls. He was very much impressed. Mr. Woodrow was induced by the Secretary of the school to pay a visit of inspection to the school at Katipara, beautifully situated in a garden of flowers, and open to air, only a little way off from Raruli. Mr. Bansidhar Ghosh, the founder of the school has proposed to place it under Government control promising annually to contribute Rs. 300/-. This is the most flourishing village in this part of the country. People, if they so mind, can raise enough money to run a school easily, even a college. But difference of opinion, and intoxication of wealth keep them from uniting and stand in its realisation. As it is, the school can expect to be permanent, if only Government extend help to it.

"A friend from Raruli writes to say: 'An incident taken from his life will illustrate the active interest Harish Chandra took in educational activities, specially those connected with female education. From 1858 on, he had to stay at Calcutta from time to time. During those stays, he arranged for the education of his wife Bhubanmohini. No less a person than Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar gave her lessons in Bengali.' "

#### *Concluding Remarks.*

I have brought forward instances in support of the view that old age does not necessarily bring in *nirvana* or quiescence.

(pp. 353, 360 and 365). A thoughtful French writer on America observes :

“The civilisation of the United States tends to create a youthful type, because it demands youth inexorably whosoever wishes to gain his living and survive in it. Study American society in its offices, factories, homes, or in the streets of Chicago, or Kansas city, or in the Texas ranges, or the forests of Oregon, in church-circle or dance-place. You will see that its atmosphere and rhythm is absolutely incompatible with old age. Old age implies retiring within the self, a dislike for trouble or risk, a passive resignation to the spectacle of life, the tendency in general to play the spectator rather than the actor.” This is practically the re-echo of Emerson’s characteristics of the bustle of American life and its aversion for old age (p. 326).

I cannot, however, afford to play the spectator but prefer to be rather the actor. Action rather than reflection is my forte ; hence old age has not altogether chilled my activity and damped my energy.

But the above characterisation is true only in a limited sense. My activities outside the immediate sphere of the test-tubes (*i.e.*, chemical side) are due in the long run to the inspirational force of idealism ; some pure and disinterested longing which heartens the efforts and repays the sacrifices. The scientist should not live the life of a recluse apart from the urgent demands of his country. “It has long been proclaimed that the scientist or philosopher should live apart from the herd, like a hermit or a moral refugee. But this was only a confusing of loneliness with objectivity. For speculation in the realm of thought it is enough that one be simply disinterested or objective. The modern masses are not closed to ideas, but they want them and understand them only within the limits of their own experience or of their most constant and vital preoccupations. The problem is not to level all thought down to mass tendencies ; but to answer the questions posed by the masses. If the pure scientist or philosopher who

is capable of originality and leadership refuses to answer, then some slave to the crowd, some low journalist or venal politician, avid of popularity and profit, will answer instead" (Lucien Romier).

In an advanced country like England there is again division of labour in every field ; there are great industrialists, eminent ship-builders, engineers, merchant princes, as also whole-time statesmen and scientists—each contributing his quota. But unfortunately India is in the melting-pot—in her transitional stage—awakening from her age-long slumber and shaking off her stupor. Hence anyone with the ideas about the vast potentialities of his country is often led by necessity to divide his life into distinct halves and even smaller fractions and compartments. All the same one must be on his guard that he does not overdo his part ; that he takes up one thing at a time and does it well.

I pen these lines as some sort of *apologia pro vita mea*. Although it has been my lot to be connected with several industrial enterprises, either as founder or active co-operator, money-making has never been an engrossing pursuit with me nor has it ever been able to divert me from my main purpose. Riches to me has always consisted not in the abundance of wealth but in the fewness of wants. The well known saying that health and contentment lie in living on six pence a day and earning it has ever appealed to me. To me love of money has appeared to be the root of all evil, but up to a certain limit a good competence is a necessity as Mr. Bernard Shaw has it :

"Money represents health, strength, honour, generosity and beauty, as undeniably as the want of it represents illness, weakness, disgrace, meanness, and ugliness. Flee from poverty, which is the root of sin."

This is only an adaptation of the Sanskrit adage : दारिद्र्य दीर्घो दुष्पराश्रिताश्चौ (poverty kills all the noble instincts), which is again re-echoed in the poet's lamentation.

"Chill penury repress'd their noble rage  
And froze the genial current of the soul."

But what is a *good competence*? A discussion of it will only lead to endless controversy. The basic idea is that in these matter-of-fact days one must earn money for his daily urgent necessities but must not allow himself to be engrossed by the inordinate hankering for it. Be on your guard lest you be swallowed by the demon, or what it comes to the same thing: Plain living and high thinking must be the ideal ever before you.

But the danger is that the pursuit of wealth often proves fatal to a man's moral progress—its siren voice lures him to his doom. Fortunately, my inborn, natural instinct has steadied me and spared me from being sucked into the whirlpool of an industrial magnate's life. Again, my multitudinous and varied activities have added fresh zest to life's enjoyment. I can at least partially reciprocate the sentiments embodied in the "Old Man's Comforts":

You are old, Father William, the young man cried,  
And pleasures with youth pass away;  
And yet you lament not the days that are gone,  
Now tell me the reason, I pray.  
In the days of my youth, Father William replied,  
I remember'd that youth could not last;  
I thought of the future, whatever I did,  
That I never might grieve for the past.

This modern civilization and its concomitant greed of wealth threaten to overwhelm mankind. A writer graphically describes the danger:

"The Post-war era has been remarkable for a greed of wealth and enjoyment beyond any hitherto known. All classes, as a matter of fact, have been permeated by the cult of indulgence. Year by year expenditure on pleasure in all its forms rises. The dress or fashion bill is vastly more than the bill for bread or meat. You find innumerable young men and women whose main object in life is to have a good time. They prefer to have it at somebody else's expense.

"These people are the weak puppies of the litter. They do not matter much.

"But the children who will be rising to young manhood and young womanhood in the next two decades matter vitally, and it should be a matter both of individual and of national concern that they are not debauched or misled by examples and precepts which are fashionable to-day. In the crucible of home and school, they are made—or marred.

"In too many homes, and in too many schools, children are being taught to admire rather than to disdain standards of success in life based upon selfishness, acquisitiveness, snobbishness, national and individual aggrandisement, personal power. They are encouraged to believe that the accumulation of money and possessions is the peak of success, and that a hard-working happy plodder is a figure of fun." It is time, therefore, to cry halt.

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